The Gospel of Love

Hester Alway

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The Gospel of Love

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Jesus the Christ the Son of God
Love Incarnate

According to John the Beloved Disciple

MEDITATIONS

By
HESTER ALWAY

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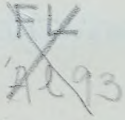

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To
My Brothers and Sisters
in the
World Harvest Field

(*The Alumni of the Union Missionary Training Institute*)
And to those whom they are Discipling from all Nations
These Meditations in the Blessed Life
Are Affectionately Dedicated

By
Their "Elder Sister"

MAY 29 1919

Preface

THE *Meditations* were begun for personal edification only, while shut away alone in a sweet vale of the pine-clad Surrey Hills of England; but as they took form the conviction grew that the thoughts so athrill with life to me were to be shared, and as I had but recently laid down a great and dearly loved work with which for more than twenty years I had been closely identified, the purpose was formed in much gladness of heart to dedicate them to those whose studies in the Blessed Life I had so often led and to those also whom they are discipling from all nations.

To the authors named below I would make due acknowledgment for instruction and inspiration received, though at the time of the first writing I had no helps with me, my Bible and Greek Testament only.

And now all steeped in freshness of morning dews, mystery of woodland shadows, pollen and fragrance of myriad flowers,—the dews of living converse with the Beloved, the holy mystery of Spirit-union, the fructifying power and ravishing sweetness of Divine Love,—my little book is sent forth in the Blessed Name. From it may the "living rivers" flow, those Spirit-Rivers of promise; for verily it is the fruit of that union with the Divine born of insatiable thirst and consummated in unspeakable bliss.

H. A.

Elim Gardens,
Eagle Rock, Cal.

"Commentary of St. John," Godet; "Word Studies in the New Testament," Vincent; "The Training of the Twelve," Bruce; "The Companion Bible."

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Plan

First—To delineate the Perfect Life, Incarnate Love, its Deity, simplicity, naturalness, power, sacrifice, continuity.

Second—To show how that Life, that Love, is to be reproduced.

The method throughout is chiefly that of Personal Interviews in private or in public, with the ones, the little groups, or the many; the contagion of a Divine Personality.

Purpose

That ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name (Chap. 20 : 31).

And this is life eternal in order that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, Jesus Christ (Chap. 17 : 3).

Content

A concise summary of John's views of Jesus Christ, the product of years of personal acquaintance and of a long life of Spirit-enlightenment, of loving service, and of deep reflection. *It is essentially the product of love.* The Gospel according to John has insight, the insight of a contemplative receptivity, love-absorbed. The writer drank in secret and unintermittingly at a Divine Spring. The perfect sympathy essential to perfect understanding existed between him and his Lord. And as the Son who was "in the bosom of the Father" alone could declare Him, so the disciple who was in the bosom of the Master most perfectly knew Him, and most fully could make Him known.

Some Tributes to the Gospel of John

The diamond among the Gospels.—*Lange.*

The Plato of the inspired Circle.—*Kaufman.*

The Heart of Christ.—*Ernesti.*

A perfect work of art.—*Marcus Dods.*

John does not argue, he sees, he soars.—*Philip Schaff.*

It was by his unwearied intuition of Christ and by absorbing love to Him that St. John was made a writer. The ancients named him Epistethius, The Recumbent One, meaning that not only once or twice but always he was lying in the bosom of Jesus.

This Gospel speaks a language to which no parallel whatever is to be found in the whole compass of literature: such childlike simplicity with such contemplative profundity; such life and deep rest; such sadness and such serenity, and above all such a breath of love.—*Tholuck.*

> But patient stated much of the Lord's life
> Forgotten or misdelivered, and let it work;
> Since much that at the first in deed or word
> Lay simply and sufficiently exposed,
> Had grown (or else my soul was grown to match,
> Fed thro' such years, familiar with such light,
> Guarded and guided still to see and speak)
> Of new significance and fresh result;
> What first were guessed as points, *I now knew stars*
> And named them in the Gospel I have writ.
>
> —*From "A Death in the Desert" by Browning.*

This Gospel is characterized by the profuse employment of symbolism. "John," says Lange, "gives us not only a symbolism of the Old Testament Word, of Old Testa-

ment institutions, histories, and persons; he gives also the symbolism of nature, of antiquity, of history and of personal life; hence the absolute symbolism, or the ideal import of all real existence, in significant outlines."

—*Vincent's "Word Studies," Introduction.*

My Lord, my Love! in pleasant pain
How often have I said,
"Blessed that John who on Thy breast
Laid down his head!"
It was that contact all divine
Transformed him from above
And made him amongst men the man
To show forth holy love.

—*Christina Rossetti.*

Meditation One

THE LOGOS

(*Chapter 1 : 1–18*)

A Paraphrase

In the beginning was Love, and Love was with God, and God was Love. The same was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Love, and apart from Love not even one thing came into being that hath come into being. In Love was the Fountain of Life, and the Life (the Love-life) was the Light of men. And the Light (the Love-light, underived, absolute) shineth in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not.

There came a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the Light (the Love-light) that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but came that he might bear witness of the Light.

That was the true Light (the Love-light) which coming into the world lighteth every man. He (Love) was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, and the world knew Him not. He (Love) came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not. But as many as received Him to them gave He authority to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name (Himself), who was begotten not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And Love became flesh and dwelt among us and we gazed upon His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father (the glory of Love) full of grace and truth. John beareth witness of Him and crieth saying, This was He of whom I said, He that cometh after me is before me. For His fullness (the fullness of Love) we all received and grace for grace continuous, unintermitted. For the law was given

by Moses, grace and truth in supreme manifestation came through Jesus Christ (incarnate Love). No one hath seen God at any time; God only begotten who is in the bosom of the Father (Love homed in Love) He hath declared Him.

AN OUTLINE

Love Eternal, Essential, Companioned	vs. 1, 2
Love Creating	v. 3
Love Illuminating	vs. 4, 5
Love Universal	v. 9
Love Immanent	v. 10
Love Unrecognized	v. 10
Love Unwelcomed	v. 11
Love Authorizing	vs. 12, 13
Love Incarnated	v. 14
Love Imparted	v. 16
Love Expressed	v. 17
Love at Home	v. 18
Love giving Vision of the Father	v. 18

The Logos (vs. 1–5):

"In the beginning *was the Word.*" To timelessness, the infinite Beyond of that other "In the beginning" of Genesis 1 : 1, John introduces us by this masterly first stroke. "The beginning" of the æons which were prepared by the Word. (See Heb. 1 : 2; 11 : 3.) "And the Word was *with* God." In that blinding glimpse of glory is revealed a holy companionship with God in the sense of a living union and communion. "And the Word was with *God.*" It is the Divine Companionship of Equals. "*Was* God," Infinite, Eternal, Perfect, Almighty, revealing the invisible God as the spoken word reveals the invisible thought (Col. 2 : 3; Heb. 1 : 1, 2).

"All things were made through Him." Now Time, its activities and multitudinous life looms large, but the Source looms larger. Glorious child of God this universe from star to firefly, from forests of Lebanon to my garden's

grass blade, for "without him was not even one thing made that hath been made."

"In him was life and the life was the light of men." All, all this limitless life, magnificent and infinitesimal, this physical, material universe, issuing out from that Divine Fatherhood and Motherhood, was for moral and spiritual illumination. "Eternal matter?" No. "Inherent evil in matter?" No. All was from Him who is Life, the Fountain of all life, and the Life was for Light. There is a three-fold power of light, actinic, luminiferous, calorific—life-producing, illuminative, heat-giving,—and it is all symbolic of holiness or the life of God, truth or the mind of God, love or the heart of God, and it is intentioned to one end, "the light of men."

"The darkness overcame it not." The dread background darkness is seen, chaos has entered the cosmos and the Conflict of the Ages in its inception is suggested with its victorious finale, "overcame it not."

A Human Link (vs. 6–8):

"There came a man." Here is an unchanging principle of the Divine method. In creation God is sole actor, in re-creation man becomes His partner. Indeed the whole history of Humanity, the whole Drama of Redemption, may be summed up in three clauses:—

God for Man; Man coöperating with God; Man opposing God.

A Tragedy (vs. 9–11):

"He came unto his own and his own received him not." He, the True Light, the Universal Light ("lighteth every man"), the World's Maker, comes home to His own people Israel and finds a closed door, no welcome, no recognition. He is the Unknown, the Undesired.

Grace (vs. 12, 13):

"But." Here is the highest dignity, the greatest privilege, with which human beings were ever invested, authority to become children of God, an authority exercised by faith in the God-man.

The God-man (vs. 14–18):

"The Word became flesh." The progressive revelation of Christ's glory culminates in this epochal statement. Light He had ever been, and ever "coming into the world" to light every man; but more was needed. Nature's light had been but a reflection at best, and that too often had been veiled. John and all the God-sent ones before him, an unbroken procession, with their oracles, their types and their ritual, were only clearer shadows. More was needed, that infinite more of Love's timeless provision. The Hour has struck, *that Hour of the Ages*, for which the Triune God had never ceased to prepare, into whose mystery angels had desired to peer, for whose coming prophets had yearned: The Word became flesh! This is creation's climax, the Creator created, the God a man. Now at last the chasm is bridged, the veils are removed, the shadows flee away. In the Creation account (Gen. 1) "God said" occurs eight times, but here is the final speech of God (Heb. 1 : 1, 2), all gathered into one Word, that Word which was glory, that Word which was full of grace and truth, that Word which was the complete exegete of the Father, that Word which was the progenitor of a New Race, the Spirit-born, upon whom were to descend continuous unintermitted grace, His own "fullness."

O blessed One, forever homed in Love, the Father's bosom; forever expressing Love, sweet speech of God; forever tabernacling among us in Spirit-immanence, I worship and adore Thee. For me the Light hath shone, to me the Word hath spoken, in me the Love hath kindled. Shine on, speak on, flame on, O Light and Truth and Love!

Meditation Two

LOVE REVEALED

Hereby we know love, because he laid down his life for us (1 John 3 : 16).

According to the Scriptures Love is the sum of the perfection of God (1 John 4 : 8); the initiative of salvation (John 3 : 16); the fulfillment of all Divine requirements (Matt. 22 : 34); the medium of Divine knowledge (1 John 4 : 7); the one perpetual obligation (Rom. 13 : 8); the impulsive power of the new life (2 Cor. 5 : 14–15); the alchemy that for the lover of God transmutes all into good (Rom. 8 : 28); the inalienable right of the soul (Rom. 8 : 38–39); the sunlit height of the Christian life (2 Pet. 1 : 5–7); the supreme gift (1 Cor. 13). Indeed the philosophy of life might be summed in three great words :—

Made by Love,—"God is Love;" *Made for Love*,—only love can satisfy love; *Made to Love*,—to impart to others the Divine fire. *Life is Love. Love is Life.*

And fittingly may this Gospel of the beloved disciple be called "Love Revealed," under the spectroscope of deep meditation analyzing itself as follows :—

Love Attested	Chap. 1 : 19–34
Love Attracting	Chap. 1 : 35–51
Love Transforming	Chap. 2 : 1–11
Love Cleansing	Chap. 2 : 13–22
Love Teaching	Chap. 3 : 1–21
Love Magnified	Chap. 3 : 22–36
Love Satisfying and Satisfied	Chap. 4
Love Quickening	Chap. 5 : 1– 9
Love Commissioned	Chap. 5 : 10–47
Love Sustaining	Chap. 6
Love Unfettered	Chap. 6 : 15–21
Love Unhasting	Chap. 7 : 1–14

Love Acquitting and Emancipating	Chap. 8 : 1–11
Love Eternal - - - -	Chap. 8 : 12–59
Love Enlightening - - -	Chap. 9
Love Shepherding - - -	Chap. 10
Love Life-giving - - -	Chap. 11
Love Beloved - - - -	Chap. 12 : 1–11
Love Sought - - - -	Chap. 12 : 20–36
Love Serving - - - -	Chap. 13
Love Confiding and Comforting -	Chap. 14
Love Imparted - - - -	Chap. 15
Love Withdrawing - - -	Chap. 16
Love Interceding - - -	Chap. 17
Love Betrayed - - - -	Chap. 18
Love Outpoured - - -	Chap. 19
Love Triumphant - - -	Chap. 20
Love Unchanged - - -	Chap. 21

The burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi was, "I have loved you, saith the Lord" (Mal. 1 : 1, 2), and the burden of the Word of the Lord to the Church by John is, *I have loved you, so loved you as to give unto you the Perfect Love that in Him you too may love and live.*

O Gift Unspeakable, by Thy matchless life I hear Thee saying, "Follow after love," and my heart makes answer in its one ceaseless and all-absorbing quest. Once I might have prayed with another: "Send some one, Lord, to love the best that is in me and to be satisfied with nothing less, to search me with the searching tenderness of the passion for the ideal, to demand the best of me, and to be satisfied with nothing less, to demand everything from me, and give everything in return."

But long since, I heard Thee say, "Lo, *I* am with you," and now all my heart cry is *that I may know Thee.*

THE SUPREME QUEST

Soul of the Supernal,
Aureole of earth,
Being's law eternal,
Life's supremest worth,

To thy sway I'm summoned
With the powers above,
To thy quest abandoned,
Matchless mystery Love.

In the cleansing silence,
Inmost soul laid bare
To thy burning Presence,
Hear my passion-prayer:
By thine incarnation,
By thy Wind and Flame,
Consummate creation,
(1 Cor. 6: 17.) *Spirits one acclaim.*

From that mystic union,
Wrapt, ineffable,
Life one vast communion,
Earth in Heaven's enthrall,
Fruitage rich shall ripen
For world-hunger meant,
And still th' quest lie open
(Eph. 3: 19.) Thro' ageless time unspent.

Meditation Three

THE SPIRIT BAPTIZER

(*Chapter 1 : 19–34*)

Subject : An Introduction—The Voice crying " Behold."
Scene : The Ford of Arabah.
Persons : Jesus, John the Baptist, the People.
Central Thought : " Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit."

Interior Truth : THE CHILD of the Desert and the Carpenter of Nazareth, face to face, the popular and powerful Preacher and the unknown Galilean ! It is an epochal moment. The two young men are in their prime, the one rugged and ascetic, roughly clothed with a mantle of camel's hair belted with leather, recognized as a prophet by all ; the other in the ordinary dress of a villager, nothing conspicuous about Him, apparently nothing extraordinary, one whom the people thought they knew quite well. But the desert-dweller, filled with the Holy Ghost from birth, deeply versed in the Scriptures which had been his university and library in the solitudes, the desert-dweller has had his vision,—*he sees, he knows.* The wonderful fullness of that recognition, Sin-bearer, Spirit-Baptizer, amazes one, especially in view of the fact that three years of close association with Jesus did not give the Apostles such. Oh, to be Spirit-taught ! No other teaching so quickens and illuminates the mind.

" The Lamb of God that taketh away sin—the sin of the world—Behold " (v. 29). All that swept through the Baptist's mind in that great moment cannot be compressed into a few words. The history of humanity and of his

people from Eden to that hour; the promises and prophecies; the elaborate ritual symbolic and elementary; the sin that had blighted the world and that had overwhelmed his spirit in the vast aloneness until he was impelled forth to cry against it,—all this swept before him in light and shadow to this one sunburst of glory. The Real had come. God's provision is here. The pall is lifted. The world may be free, shall be free. What burden must have rolled from John's heart, what joy must have flooded it! No narrow vision this—"The world" is not Judaism, nor Judaism the world. He saw redemption's widest scope. Again we say, Oh, to be Spirit-taught! No other teaching so enlarges the mind.

The Baptizer in Spirit Holy (vs. 32–34). Of all the titles of the Son of Man none is more vital, more essential, more expressive, than this. "Lamb of God," Sacrifice for sin,—that must take precedence in time, the time of our thought, though to relate time to God's plans is but an aid of our finite way of thinking.

Baptizer in Spirit. Do I know Him by this name, this strange new name in human nomenclature? He is the Progenitor of a New Race, the "Children of God," the Spirit-born, and as such is at once introduced by the Herald. Let us give close heed to this great theme as we proceed; it is exhaustless in possibilities of development, in interest and in value. That the forerunner could thus epitomize his Lord's work is marvellous. And once again we cry, Oh, to be Spirit-taught! No other teaching so floods the mind with truth, mysterious truth, apocalyptic truth, eternal truth.

But He is not only Spirit-Baptizer. He is also *Spirit-Baptized.* Jesus had His Pentecost at the Ford of Arabah; the apostles had their Pentecost in the upper room at Jerusalem; Paul had his Pentecost after the three days' darkness at Damascus; Cornelius, his kinsmen and his friends, had their Pentecost in the home at Cæsarea,—when, where, did I have my Pentecost, did you have your Pentecost?

Let us beware of attaching any stereotyped significance to this great experience, this immersion in Spirit, in Spirit holy. As we continue our meditations we shall learn there cannot be anything stereotyped, anything restricted, in what is Life, fullness of Life, progressive Life. Only this let us note here: the Son of God began His public ministry of teaching and healing and commissioning *after* His Spirit-Baptism with its consequent and awful wilderness-conflict with the arch-adversary; and let us therefrom learn the fundamental relationship between Spirit-Baptism, Satan's onslaughts and Divine power among men.

NOTE—*The remainder of the Gospel narrative is Personal Experience, the personal experience of one who now for the first time comes under the influence subtle, dynamic, deathless, of the young Man from Nazareth, the Glorious Life, the Perfect Love.*

Meditation Four

THE GREAT COMRADE

(*Chapter 1 : 35–51*)

Subject : The New League of Comradeship, or a Parting and a Great Meeting.

Scene : Outdoor Life in Galilee, the Jordan, the Foot-path, the Garden.

Persons : The Two Teachers (the Great and the Greater) and Five Disciples, seven young men.

Central Thought : "And they followed Jesus."

Interior Truth : Was there not at this hour a blossoming of the Blessed Life? Jesus could but have impressed His fellow-townsmen before, for He was ever true, manly, helpful and earnest. But now a strange, new, drawing power is felt emanating from His presence. It is the Spirit, the fullness of the Spirit. And is there not such a blossoming time in every life Spirit-immersed? The Spirit-immersed ever draw, ever attract earnest, seeking, kindred souls, for Christ's method still is a *personal friendship.*

We were made for each other, Jesus and the human soul; and when we meet we know each other. *These young men needed Jesus; Jesus needed these young men.* Yes, and He needed them with just their own particular and peculiar temperaments: John, the man of insight, of love, intense; Andrew, the discoverer of others, selfless, sympathetic; Peter, the man of action, impulsive; Philip, a twin brother in spirit with Andrew; Nathaniel, the man of prayer, of contemplation, retiring. And Jesus needs *me.* Unless I join it the League of Comrades will not be complete.

"Come." Unchanged are the approachableness, the cordiality, sympathy, responsiveness, discernment, attractiveness of Jesus to-day; unchanged also His ready self-revealing. And the invitation has never been recalled, "*Come*," *come home with me*. O, Great One, I accept it. Thou art so winsome I must come; Thy attraction I cannot withstand; I would know Thee better; I would abide with Thee "that day" not only, but forever.

Two young men went home with Jesus that first day, and of one it is recorded, "he findeth first his own brother." Noble record. May the "Brotherhood of Andrew" increase. But what of that blank, that silence? Where is John? O hush thee! Rush not heedlessly into any Holy of Holies. Let the silence remain unbroken—it will wake the echoes of the future. Let the blank be unfilled—it shall be written full in living light above. John could not go out that day, the thirst of his own soul was too intense, the joy of his heart too absorbing, the demands of his spirit too passionate. My gaze is veiled with the mist of comprehending tears as I see them there together, the Friend and His friend, Infinite Love and His lover. Leave them alone. John will go out another day to seek, to win; aye, he has been going out through the centuries in a power and to an extent exceeding that of any other disciple in that group.

My soul, wouldest call others to thy Lord? Learn of John; *love like John;* with Zinzendorf say, "I have but one passion—it is He, He only." "He smiled on me, and through the endless ages Him must I love, Him only."

"My heart to Thee I give for aye,
O, Jesu, sweetest, best!
Thy Heart to me give Thou I pray,
O Jesu, loveliest!
Our hearts alone Thou dost require,
Our hearts alone Thou dost desire,
Make me love Thee as Thou dost me,
O Jesu, Fount of Charity!"

"*Heaven opened, angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man*,"—this "*ye shall see*." Yea, this we do see though its perfect fulfillment awaits our Lord's return. Every hillside now is a Bethel; every garden, every foot-path, every highway, every home, every market-place, every altar, "a gate of heaven" to the *seeing*. *Heaven is opened*, that sphere, that condition of "every spiritual blessing" (Eph. 1 : 3). And the Son of Man is the ladder reaching down from those celestial realms of All-Good upon which the Divine messengers forever wing their tireless way. "Son of Man"—note well the Master's chosen appellation for Himself, name given Him by none other. "It is the expression of His self-consciousness as being related to humanity as a whole." In Him dwells the fullness of humanity as well as the fullness of Deity; and He is "the last Adam," progenitor of a New Race. It is in His perfected humanity He becomes the Holy Ladder. And ever since Gabriel announced His birth, and the angel choir sang *The Gloria in Excelsis* over Bethlehem's plains, those heavenly hosts have been interested spectators of, and keen participants in the Drama of Redemption. As they ministered unto the Son of Man in His desert exhaustion, and strengthened Him in His "black hour" (Matt. 4 : 11, Luke 22 : 43), and flung wide His tomb, and announced His coming again (Matt. 28 : 2, Acts 1 : 11), so are they still identified with His redemption work, rejoicing over every sinner that repents (Luke 15 : 10), and doing service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation (Heb. 1 : 4). Angels of God, Holy "Winds" and "Flames of Fire," ceaseless processional of glory upon the Highway that bridges Heaven and Earth, speed on your endless ministries. A Daniel still waits (Dan. 8 : 16; 9 : 20–23), O Gabriel, the explanation of mysteries from thee; and other grace-endued maidens holy annunciations (Luke 1 : 28). And a people oppressed need ever thine aid, O Michael (Dan. 12 : 1). Yes, all ye "holy myriads" of the heavenly polity, attend ever the King of Grace, great *Santa Scala* of all souls.

Meditation Five

THE WONDERFUL GUEST

(*Chapter 2*)

Subject: Water made Wine. The first sign.
Scene: A Village Home on a Wedding Day, Cana of Galilee.
Persons: Jesus, His Mother, His Disciples, the Bridal Guests.
Central Thought: "This beginning of signs did Jesus . . . and manifested his glory."

Interior Truth: THE attitude of Jesus' mother reveals a holy past, a secret understanding; no one else expected Him to do the unusual thing, no one else saw in Him Nature's Lord. So it is that whatever of public potency there be in our relations with Him it must spring from a secret bond, from those holy and mysterious spirit-relations where deep answereth to deep.

A humble home is the sphere for this first sign, a social gathering the occasion, Mary's expressed desire the immediate cause, and water the agency—all so simple, so ordinary, yet here was Jesus' opportunity of manifesting His glory, His glory as the Life of Nature, the Ennobler of Nature (showing its inner possibilities), the Interpreter of Nature. Out of the elements of need, desire, obedience and expectancy, what wonders the Divine Alchemist still produces. To look still deeper, do we not see in this sign a call to Israel to find in Him her Messiah, source of all supply and all joy?

The Wonderful Guest will come if called to all our feasts. And oh, it is like Him still to give wine for water, yes, wine, best wine for *the feast*—roses and apple-blossoms and sunsets and deep friendships and sweet loves as well as

bread and toil. No expectation we can frame, no hope we can cherish can transcend, nay can reach His desire, His will for us; the heights are still "exceeding abundantly above."

"All life is potentially divine." The transformation of the water is a prophecy of the ennoblement of all nature by the Lord of Life. In the New Creation day of the new heavens and new earth (2 Pet. 3 : 13) every desert will become a rose garden, and every mirage a pool (Isa. 35 : 17). Then may His people "dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods" (Ez. 34 : 25). Then will the flame of a sword have departed from before the tree of life forever (Gen. 3 : 24; Rev. 22 : 12). And then will it be that "everything in His temple saith Glory" (Ps. 29 : 9). But even now to spirit eyes

> "Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God."

> "I gaze aloof at the tissued roof
> Where time and space are the warp and woof
> Which the King of kings like a curtain flings
> O'er the dreadfulness of eternal things.
> But if I could see, as in truth they be,
> The glories that encircle me,
> I should lightly hold this tissued fold
> With its marvellous curtain of blue and gold;
> For soon the whole like a parchéd scroll
> Shall before my amazéd eyes unroll,
> And without a screen at one brush be seen
> The Presence in which I have always been."

The mighty parable of the material universe, the "chamber of imagery" of nature, the oracles of forests and fields and floods, the hieroglyphics of mines and mountains (yea written in leaf and cell and electron), the miracles of all life's teeming marriages and births and metamorphoses—all is a theophany and all a prophecy.

"Take these things hence." O pass through our Temples to-day, thou Man of Authority, of strange personal power, of fearless impassioned zeal! Our Thought-Temples—what a sweeping away of the debris of creeds there would be and of life-plans and of ideals! Our Love-Temples—what a cleansing of the affections, what an overthrow of idolatry! Our Prayer-Shrines—what a silencing of mocking and of much speaking, what a releasing of spirit-potencies! Our Work-Temples—what an overturning of the artificial, the superficial, the self-complacent, the self-chosen, the self-centred tasks! Mighty Iconoclast, pass through the Temple of my life and spare not. Let naught remain save the True, the Pure, the Beautiful!

Meditation Six

THE TEACHER COME FROM GOD

(*Chapter 3 : 1–21*)

Subject : The New Birth—A Conversation.
Scene : A Housetop in Jerusalem—The silent night.
Persons : Jesus and Nicodemus, the two Teachers.
Central Thought : "Ye must be begotten from above."

Interior Truth : THE "Teacher come from God" is *now* at home and at leisure to talk with any inquirer concerning the Kingdom of God. And the substance of the conversation can never change :—The Kingdom of God is the one thing worth seeing ; only the begotten from above can see it ; that above-birth is of Spirit and unto Spirit ; it is mysterious—"knowest not" whence nor whither nor how ; it is the fruit of faith and power—*life* for *belief* in the *Lifted-up ;* it is a conception of Love,—"so loved," "gave."

"Except one be begotten anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Over the portals of the domain of universal love, "the kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14 : 17), flames out this guarding truth : "Ye must be begotten anew," only such enter here. "The mind of the flesh is death" (Rom. 8 : 6) ; this is the sphere of life. "That which has been begotten of flesh is flesh" ; this is the realm of spirit. "Marvel not." Hesitate not. Be not proud and self-sufficient and unbelieving. Accept the divine fiat. Bow in humility. Confess that you are dead, "dead through trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2 : 1). Wait not to understand the mystery of life "the Spirit breatheth where he pleaseth, and thou

hearest his voice, but knowest not whence he cometh and whither he goeth. So is every one that is begotten of the Spirit." Yield to that life-breathing Spirit. "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5 : 12). Accept that life-giving Gift of love. Then lo! the portals will swing wide and the Kingdom of God be found "within" (Luke 17 : 21).

And this is but initial truth, "earthly things." Whoso is content to stop with this lesson, great as it is, elemental, fundamental, has only opened the door into the University of Heavenly Lore. A babe, a babe in its mother's arms, a babe in Christ's household, what is more lovely? But a dwarf, a dwarf in the home, a dwarf in the church, what is more pitiful, more heart-breaking? O Teacher divine, I would fain leave the rudimentary classes, the "first principles of Christ," and "press on (lit. be *borne on*) to perfection," full-growth, possessing faculties habitually exercised, that so "solid food," the "heavenly things," may be my portion (Heb. 5 : 11–6 : 2).

And what are the "things heavenly," what the "solid food"? We shall learn as we proceed in these meditations, for the disciples were *learners* and advanced lessons were assigned them step by step. Yet it may be well to pause here and scan the curriculum, look over the full course upon which we have entered:—

"God's wisdom in a mystery" (1 Cor. 2 : 6–16) unknown to this age, but *Spirit-explored* and *Spirit-revealed* to *spiritual men* as distinguished from psychical and fleshly ones. It includes the unseen, the unheard, the unthought. And the qualification for enrollment and advancement is love,—love that will banish the infantile state of jealousy and strife and individualism and partisanship, and give the full clear vision of Infinite Possessions, of Community Life (1 Cor. 3 : 1–4 and 21–23 with 13 : 11–12).

The end of this unsurpassed course and our Commencement Day is the completion of the solidarity of Christians and their union with Christ (Eph. 4 : 11–16), for the

"fullness of Christ" is in effect *Christ and His Church.* (See Eph. 1 : 23.)

Love is the *initiative* of salvation—"God so loved"; its *expression* the highest gift of an Infinite Lover, to the very emptying heaven of the Beloved—"He gave his only begotten son"; its *scope* "the world"; its one *demand*, faith—"Whosoever believeth"; its grand *achievement*, life—"should not perish, but have eternal life."

Infinite love, uttermost sacrifice, free grace, eternal life, —they are all here in the one brief sentence of John 3 : 16. It is the Gospel in epitome. It is the heart of this Gospel of Love.

Meditation Seven

THE BRIDEGROOM

(Chapter 3 : 22–36)

Subject : The Eclipse of John the Baptist.
Scene : The Waters of Ænon, Judea.
Persons : Jesus, John and his Disciples, the Jews.
Central Thought : "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Interior Thought : MORE comprehensive grows the witness of the Herald : The Bridegroom, the Above One, the Witness of heavenly things, the Sent of God, the Father's beloved Son, the Heir of all things, the Life-giver. More lowly too his own self-appraisement : "I must decrease" —as friend of the Bridegroom. My joy is a relative thing, my influence a waning one.

To be Christ-eclipsed must ever be the aim and the fate of every true witness ; and to give a fuller testimony to Christ must be the experience of every true witness, because forever there is more to know and to declare of Him in whom "dwelleth the fullness of God." We do well to measure our lives by the standard of John's. Have we his deep humility, his self-effacement ? Are we giving his sublime growing witness ? Or must it in all truth be said that we are very stringent in our demands for recognition, very keen for preferment ; that self-seeking indeed more fittingly characterizes our ministry for Christ than self-effacement ? And must it also be said that our testimony has never outgrown its infancy, is still in swaddling bands, a cramped, stunted thing without virility or expansiveness or that mystery of infinity born of the explorer's eager zest with its sparkle and flash and magnetism ?

O Searcher of Hearts, let us not dissemble before Thee or our own hearts. Let us see ourselves as we are, then make us what Thou wouldst have us be.

BRIDEGROOM! Dear best name. Wordless, uttermost, holiest hope of human hearts through the long ages. The very word diffuses fragrance distilled from multitudinous symbols and visions beatific. From that Primal Nuptial in paradisiacal bowers to the last Temple of Home reared on earth, the Real has cast its shadow, for "this material universe is but a working hypothesis for the spiritual and divine." And the Song of the Ages heard in psalms and canticles and oracles to the closing Hallelujah Chorus of the Apocalypse, has had the single refrain, "The marriage of the Lamb." O heavenly hope incomprehensible! O mystic Bridal of Redemption! Thy meaning all I cannot grasp, but this I know, "He is all desires" here and now, my soul's Beloved.

So even I, and with a pang more thrilling,
So even I, and with a hope more sweet,
Yearn for the sign, O Christ, of Thy fulfilling,
Faint for the flaming of Thine advent feet.

Oh, what a hope! And when afar it glistens,
Stops the heart beating and the lips are dumb;
Inly my spirit to His silence listens,
Faints till she find Him, quivers till He come.

—F. W. H. Myers in "St. Paul."

"God is true." Then His covenants will be ratified, His promises will be fulfilled, the hopes He has awakened will be realized, the visions He has given actualized? Yes, my soul solemnly attests it is even so. God does not mock us. He is true. But He does not always *seem* to be true—defeat, disappointment, delay, death itself *seem* all triumphant. "Seem"? That is Unbelief's word, and Unbelief is near-sighted. "God is true" declares Faith, and Faith sees far.

THE HEIGHTS

Unbelief

The Heights, the awful Heights! I cannot climb.
They mock, they crush, so unattainable,
Upon their brows such ghastly coronal
My heart would fail in that high altitude.

I once aspired—and failed. Dared all too much,
Dreamed all too high. The ruins lie behind.
Give me some grassy knoll, a sunny plain.
I cannot climb, for He, for He has gone.

Faith

The Heights, the glorious Heights! O, this is life!
Ye draw me like a dream of love, so far, so near,
So dear. Sublimity intense. Your air
The very breath of God, His calm upon your brows.

O sunlit, snow-crowned peaks, I laugh to think
Ye only are God's emblems for the soul,
Ye only point the way—the Heights for aye beyond.
And oh, I shall attain, for He, for He is here!

Meditation Eight

THE TIRED TRAVELLER

(*Chapter 4: 1–42*)

Subject: The Water of Life and the Worship of God—A Conversation.
Scene: Jacob's Well, Samaria.
Persons: Jesus, the Samaritaness.
Central Thought: "And he must needs pass through Samaria."

Interior Truth: THERE is a "must needs," a divine compulsion for *all the way* of every God-sent one. It may be, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house into the land that I will show thee" (Gen. 12 : 1) because there is a Family of Faith to found, a Land of Promise to possess. It may be "Hide thyself" (1 Kings 17 : 3), because of all persons the prophet needs solitude, that "mother country of the great." Or it may be "Show thyself" (1 Kings 18 : 1), because to a king a message must be given. Sometimes it is "Go unto Gaza, the same is desert" (Acts 8 : 4–6, 26–30), away from the heedful multitudes, because there is one potential soul to instruct. Sometimes it is a "forbidding of the Spirit," a "suffering not" (Acts 16 : 6–8), because there is a vision to see, a voice to hear, a great door of greater opportunity to enter, aye, a Rome to reach. Or it may be "through Samaria" the *must needs* lies, because there is one ready for supreme revelations. And no matter which, no matter where, no matter what, *let God choose*—that is all.

The circumference of His will is so vast, compassing time and earth and eternity, we can discern but a tiny segment, and therefore are unqualified to plan the route to the glorious Goal. Wise are we if we have learned to listen for orders. Wiser are we if we are content to "sail under

sealed orders," because what we had supposed the port of destination may be only a coaling station. Great Traveller, I yield me to the "must needs" of Thine example and of Thy present ordering.

> "To the overguiding will my own I gladly yield,
> And while my little craft outstands
> I sail with orders sealed.
> Some time, I know not when nor how,
> All things will be revealed,
> And until then content am I
> To sail with orders sealed."

"Give me to drink." Dear tired Traveller, Thy thirst is still unquenched. And there is no answer save that given by the Samaritaness, *herself*. Consider that keen sense of the fitness of things as she had been trained to regard them, that wise questioning, that eager receptivity and response, that unhesitating insight, that swift leading on of the conversation to the crucial question, and that final evangelizing zeal, and be no longer amazed that to this Samaritaness, a woman, a sinner, the unknown Traveller gives the supreme revelation, that *of God and Himself:* "God is Spirit," "I am He." *Here was a receptive soul.* O deeply then He drank! "Food that ye know not of" —ye disciples, slow of heart. So Blessed One, give I myself to Thee, a libation of love, "mistaking not my end, to slake thy thirst." "Drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved" (Song of Sol. 5 : 1).

The Father—God is Spirit—I am Messiah. To Nicodemus the Sanhedrist, the teacher of Israel, initial truth, "earthly things"; to the water-drawer, woman unlearned, ultimate truth, "heavenly things." Why? The answer lies in that later pæan, "Praise to thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them to babes" (Matt. 11 : 25). Apocalypses to babes! Then the babes' place let me take and keep,—the place of utter dependence; the place of direct sustenance from the breast

of the Divine Fount of Being; the place of closest, tenderest clinging love. It is there, only there, Thou canst lift the veils, great Apocalypse-Giver; there Thou willest the revelation of the Father who is Spirit, Light, Love; there "the Chrism we have from the Holy, and know all things" (1 John 2 : 20).

To the soul-winner there is no more fruitful Scripture than this well-side conversation. It shows us *the Master Soul-Winner at His Work.* Let us note a few points in the episode that call for reproduction:—

The swift seizing of opportunity; the awakeness to the incalculable value of the one; the naturalness and tact of address; the happy stimulation of desire; the unfailing adaptability, following the lead of the woman in conversation, yet advancing it to highest and most searching truth; the clear vision past all unpromising externals to the receptive soul; the unhesitating revelation, sublime, full, unparallelled.

Verily, in the Country of Souls, it is always harvest time—"white already unto harvest"—and greatest opportunities are ofttimes *by the way,* and to the "wearied" though never off duty Sent One of God. But to see an angel in every stone requires a Michael Angelo; a potential evangelist in the humble, casual stranger, the anointed eyes, unprejudiced mind, and wide heart of a Master Sculptor in the precious marbles of enduring spirit. As to those marvelling disciples, their succession, alas, remains unbroken.

And results, what of results? The tired Traveller is refreshed, the woman with the water pot has been transformed into the First Evangelist, a Carrier of the Water of Life; a city is moved and many won to faith in "the Saviour of the world"; and such exhaustless riches of grace and truth and power discovered and released we are still occupied exploring.

Meditation Nine

THE HEALER

(Chapters 4 : 43–5 : 18 ; 9 : 1–41)

Subject : Power at the command of Faith and of Helplessness.
Scene : Village of Cana, Jerusalem.
Persons : Jesus, a suppliant Nobleman, a Paralytic, a Blind Man.
Central Thought : "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will in no wise believe" (4 : 48). "Wouldest thou be made whole?" (5 : 6). "Behold thou art made whole, sin no more" (5 : 14). "Jesus heard that they had cast him out and finding him, he said : 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God?'" (9 : 35).

Interior Truth : Of the eight signs John recounts, three have to do with disease, four with nature, and one with death. The disease-healing signs are grouped together here for purpose of comprehensiveness ; one of the nature signs has been already discussed, and the other three will be touched upon in their setting later—bread and fishes multiplied, the sea a pathway, the draught of fishes—as will also the dead-raising sign. That John, writing his biographical sketch of Jesus' life and deeds at the close of the first century, after reflection and long experience, should give so small space to miracles and that he selects only such as are spiritual signs, is significant. And in this connection it might be remarked that Paul in all his writings has no reference to even one miracle wrought by Christ.

The subordinate place of miracles in the mind of Jesus John intimates in the quotation, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." As well is it implied in that

pathetic appeal to Philip, "Believe me or else believe me for the very work's sake" (4 : 48 ; 14 : 2).

Of the three signs of healing let us numerate a few points :

1. In only one is request preferred to Jesus; in the other two He takes the initiative.

2. The varying kinds of disease and gravity of cases are all alike to Jesus—sickness unto death, chronic paralysis, blindness from birth.

3. His method varies : The word of power to the father concerning his son who is at a distance ; the direct word of command ; the touch-application of remedy.

4. In the first case He seeks faith in the one preferring the request (4 : 48); in the second to waken desire and hope (5 : 6); in the last no preliminary approach whatever is made to the subject of the wonderful cure—the gracious boon is without any condition or requirement (9 : 6).

5. In the first instance nothing is said of the cause (5 : 14); in the second instance sin is distinctly implied ; in the third sin is as distinctly disavowed (9 : 3).

6. In the first, faith follows (4 : 53); in the second, persecution of Jesus is the result and probably faith also (5 : 16); in the third, persecution of the subject of healing follows and also faith (9 : 35–38).

7. The afterward of finding by Jesus is the vital issue in the last two instances, as far as the healed are concerned (5 : 14; 9 : 35); the faith resultant on power and love is thus wonderfully manifested ; the persistent and increasing unbelief and hatred of the Jews is, on the other hand, the portentous consequent (5 : 16; 9 : 24–29).

The Healer is with us still, the very same Jesus. Let none limit His power. Whatever your work may be, He will bestow strength to perform it. If to any invalid, any physically disadvantaged and incapacitated, comes the voice unmistakably Divine summoning to some task utterly beyond present powers, let that one know He who commands is He who enables. All things are possible

with God, all things possible to him that believeth. But *let us also find the spiritual values of our physical infirmities;* for more than the testimony "He heals" is needed that promise and witness given to and by one from whom the "thorn in the flesh" departed not: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12 : 7–9). And let us know that when He does dispense the golden gifts of physical well being, it is a promise and prophecy—as were the transmutation of water into wine, and the walking on the waves—of that day when redemption shall be complete, when this "body of our humiliation" shall be fashioned anew, "conformed to the body of his glory" (Phil. 3 : 21), and all things shall be put under man's feet, the restored, reinstated man (Ps. 8 : 6 with Heb. 2 : 6–8).

Meditation Ten

THE VICEGERENT OF GOD

(Chapter 5 : 10–47)

Subject : The Son in relation to the Father.
Scene : Jerusalem, probably the Temple Courts.
Persons : Jesus and the Jews.
Central Thought : "My Father and I."

Interior Truth : NEVER was there such a perfect Ambassadorship. It is centred in love—"for the Father loveth the Son and showeth him"; it is fulfilled in utter self-renouncement—"I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me"; it compasses all things that the Father doeth—"for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner"; it includes in its sweep judgment and life-giving—"He hath given all judgment unto the Son," "the Son also giveth life to whom he will." The life-giving finds its explanation in the fact that the Vicegerent is also the Fountain of Being, "As the Father hath life in himself, even so he gave the Son to have life in himself"; and the authority to execute judgment has this wholly and only satisfactory basis, "*because he is Son of man.*"

Effulgence of the Father's glory "without whom He would be darkness by excess of brightness," Impress of His substance, His Final Speech to man, let me see Thee, hear Thee, know Thee, the illimitable God, and thereby see, and hear and know the Father whose name is Love. And aid me now, I implore Thee, to really comprehend that the revelation written large in man's language, the language of loving relationships, of sweet intimacies, of unwearied service, of impassioned truth, of sublime pur-

pose, of ceaseless conflict, of surrendered will, of deathless hope, of martyr spirit, of divine communion, of mastership in the spheres of nature and spirit and of disease and death, —that this, all this is the expression of the Father of spirits, the Father of an infinite majesty, incomprehensible, uncreated, eternal. O this is Love!—Love seeking love. And so we meet, He here on my levels, God in man, as man; I there on His levels, in love, in spirit. "This is God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5 : 19).

UNDER HIS SHADOW

(Isa. 32 : 2.) "Under His Shadow," where desert heat rageth,
Where white sands spread far their wide wings of death.
O great Rock of Shelter in Sin's weary land
'Neath Thy coolness and comfort for aye let me stand.

(Ps. 91 : 1.) "Under His Shadow" in deep mystic retreat
Where Spirit and spirit in ecstasy meet.
O Lodge in God's breast, O Dwelling sublime,
Thou art Home of my heart, my own native clime!

(Song of Sol. 2 : 3.) "Under His Shadow" at the sources of life,—
Stillness and rapture and soul-commerce rife.
O Bower of bliss! O Banquet of love!
(Rev. 2 : 7, R. V. marg.) How can surpass thee God's Garden above?

Jesus has here opened for all time a window into the Realms of the Perfect. From those Realms He emerged

into time to be the exponent in His own Person and work of their methods, their relationships of love and confidence, also of equality yet dependence, and of their all-beauteous Life. "My Father and I"—a relationship of mutual dependence, perfect union, unbroken fellowship, all the expression of infinite love. Yes, it is the vision of the great God in the ministering, serving, sorrowing, loving Jesus. He was the outpoured heart of the Eternal expressed in terms we could understand; the love, the beauty, the tenderness, the justice, the power of the Infinite, put into the language we could read. "It is Christ who has taught us that to be God is not to be a mighty king, enthroned above the reach of His creatures, but that to be God is to have more love than all besides, to be able to make greater sacrifices for the good of all, to have an infinite capacity to humble Himself for others."

Meditation Eleven

THE GRACIOUS HOST

(*Chapter 6*)

Subject: An Out-of-Doors Supper and Its Interpretation.
Scene: The Lake of Galilee.
Persons: Jesus, the Disciples, a little Boy, the Multitude.
Central Thought: "I am the bread of life."

Interior Truth: "WHAT are these among so many?" It was not a difficult matter that day to estimate the supplies at hand, "five barley loaves and two fishes"; neither to calculate the greatness of the need, "so many"; nor to arrive at the very reasonable conclusion that supplies were inadequate to need. There was just one factor, one resource, left out of the calculation, JESUS. Ah, if the Harvest Lord be with us, and if our little all be placed unreservedly in His hands, *there is always enough to supply the need that waits on us.*

"Send the multitude away"—that is the human attitude. "Give ye them to eat"—that is the Divine attitude. Yet never may it be forgotten that coöperation is a law of harvest. Paul planted, Apollos watered, God gave the increase (1 Cor. 3 : 6). The little boy gave his bit of lunch, Jesus multiplied it, the disciples distributed. "What is that in thine hand?" (Ex. 4 : 2, 3). A rod. "Cast it on the ground." And lo, it becomes the rod of power, dividing the Red Sea and making a highway to liberty for a bondaged people. "What are these among so many?" Yet lo, five loaves and two fishes spread the table for thousands. What is that in *thine* hand? Only a rod, only a bit of bread, only a weak life, a trembling message, a petty gift. Yet lo, if placed in Christ's dear hands, it grows, it multiplies, *it is enough.*

O Blessed One, a precious heritage of love and friendship hast Thou given me, and throughout the world there are those who turn to me with yearning, with expectancy; but my heart's deeps are only shallows and I have not wherewith to answer the heart of my friend. But Thy love is my vast resource. Make my spirit as a fine strung harp, vibrating to every breath of life, Thy life and theirs. Let me reach out to clasp outstretched hands across the world. Make me rich to give, to give love and sympathy and hope and courage and comradeship. Forgive me that so often I have had nothing to set before my friend when with Thee was enough and Thine was mine. Here is my heart, my life, my all; take it and bless it, and break it and give it. Let it be for humanity's hunger, for some sad heart's solace, some broken life's support, some seeking soul's inspiration, some kindred spirit's completion.

"All that the Father hath given me shall come to me." *And to me.*

Serene I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind nor tide nor sea.
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For what is mine shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid th' eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years,
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The stars come nightly to the sky,
The tidal wave unto the sea,
Nor time nor space nor deep nor high,
Can keep mine own away from me.

—*John Burroughs.*

"*I am the bread of life.*" He who from the womb of mother earth brings forth the ripened grains and fruits to fill the granaries of the world; He who spreads for the humble bee the feast of honey in the heart of the golden laburnum by the wayside; He who provides for the mind of man truth and beauty, and for his heart sweet love, He is Host of Spirits. Jesus, all glorious, Thou art Food of my life, not as expressed by an oven-baked loaf and a cup of water, limited, conventionalized; but as symbolized in all the prodigality of waving golden harvests, laden orchards, flowing streams, air freighted with fragrance and ozone and music and steeped in pollen and sunshine, expanse of sea and sky, oh, all beauty and glory, all truth and love. Nothing less is life to me, and Thou art Life's brimming, overflowing Chalice, yea the Loving Cup of Life. Drink deep, my soul, deep, deep. O hunger insatiate! O Food Celestial! "*Thou* art all desires."

But how, does some one ask, how shall I feed on Him? All nature without us and within us makes answer. The infant is nourished by the mother's outpoured life; the pupil by the teacher's communicated wisdom; the lover by the loved one's answer of the heart, an effluence, an aroma, not less real because most subtle. And for the spirit of man is there no means of communion with the Father of spirits, the Lord of all life? That could not be. He does not mock us. He gives, we take. It is outpoured life, it is communicated wisdom, it is imparted love. Its laws are sacrifice and correspondence.

> "Life evermore is fed on death
> In earth, and sea and sky,
> That e'en a rose may breathe its breath
> Something must die."

And also, *something must partake;* sacrifice *and* correspondence.

Meditation Twelve

THE LORD OF NATURE

(*Chapter 6 : 16–20*)

Subject : A Stormy Voyage.
Scene : Night on Galilee.
Persons : Jesus and the Disciples.
Central Thought : "It is I, be not afraid."

Interior Truth : "JESUS drawing nigh." He is always drawing nigh in our every hour of peril. There is no storm-swept Galilee upon which He does not walk, no frail craft in danger to which He does not draw nigh, no fearful heart to which He would not speak, "Be not afraid." Life's stormy sea is but His highway to the soul.

"He was better to me than all my hopes,
He was better than all my fears,
He made a bridge of my broken works,
And a rainbow of my tears.
The billows that guarded my sea-girt way,
But carried my Lord on their crest;
While I dwell on the days of my wilderness march,
I can lean on His love for the rest."

There was another occasion when the disciples were out upon Galilee in a storm, the Master with them asleep; and then too they were afraid, and then too He quieted their fears. Oh, to be awake to His presence ever and to all its marvellous power! Let the storm rage on if the Master of storms be with us in the boat. Let winds and waves

lift high their voice if above their shrieking clear is heard the reassuring word, "It is I, be not afraid" (Luke 8 : 22–25).

He is sleeping! Yes, 'tis so,
Sleeping, sleeping in my woe.
Tempests rage—O Slumb'rer wake!
Car'st Thou not fierce storms o'ertake?
He is waking! Can it be
Love and Power astir in me?
He is speaking. All is still,
Bowed before that Master will.

He is sleeping! Care *thou* not
Happy Soul whom faith hath taught.
Let Him sleep or let Him wake,
Quell the storm or bid it break.
Thou art in Him, He in thee,—
Haven on the storm-tossed sea,
Peace amid the tempest's roar,
Love enfolding. Ask no more.

"They behold Jesus walking on the sea." "Subdue" and "have dominion" was part of the first command of God to man (Gen. 1 : 28). "Thou makest him to have dominion . . . thou hast put all things under his feet" is the Psalmist's description of the "Son of Man," who is "but little lower than God" (Ps. 8 : 6). In Jesus the last Adam we catch glimpses of that normal, primal man, though even unto Him "we see *not yet* all things subjected" (Heb. 2 : 8).

Well has it been said "God is the great undiscovered"; and to that we might add the parallel truth, *man is the great undiscovered.* Materialism is having its day, in the least and last known realms of electricity and ether such discoveries being made as to surpass the wildest dreams. Psychology too is coming to her own in some small degree, and in the realms of spirit there are earnest explorers. But for full research, complete discovery in every sphere, we wait the glorious day whose faint flush of dawn we discern in the man of Nazareth, the day when the "sons of God

shall be revealed, and creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God " (Rom. 8 : 21).

Yes, a prophetic deed was that night-walk across the waves. See in it, soul of mine, heir of God and joint-heir with Christ, a part of that inheritance " reserved " but " ready to be revealed " (1 Pet. 1 : 3–5).

Meditation Thirteen

THE SOURCE OF LIFE RIVERS

(*Chapter 7*)

Subject: Spirit Rivers, their Rise and Flow.
Scene: The Temple Courts.
Persons: Jesus and the Questioning People.
Central Thought: "He that believeth on me . . . from within him shall flow rivers of living water."

Interior Truth: "*My time is not yet come.*" To live God-planned, God-guided lives, is to walk with unhasting steps and yet to be always in time.

"The world is wide
In time and tide
And God is guide,—
Then do not hurry.
That man is blest
Who does his best
And leaves the rest,—
Then do not worry."

"If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching." With this word may be put that other key to knowledge, "Every one that loveth knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God." To have the moral purpose in sympathy with the Divine will and the heart aglow with love, is to be equipped for knowledge of the Divine will and Divine nature. Illumination is a logical effect, its sufficient cause right choice and love.

The Perplexing One. "He is a good man." "Not so." "How knoweth this man letters having never learned?" "Whither will this man go that we shall not

find him?" "Never man spake like this man." So the people queried and disputed. There were carping brethren and murmuring multitudes and marvelling Jews and scornful rulers and a divided people. He who alone could fully answer, in His own great way spake the self-revealing words, "My teaching is not mine but his that sent me." "If any man thirst let him come to me and drink."

So will He answer our questionings to-day. He is the same gracious, self-revealing, self-giving Jesus; ever the mysterious, but ever the satisfying.

"Rivers of living water." Spirit is born of spirit. Then it in its turn becomes productive. As birth is the theme of Chapter 3 : 3–10, so motherhood, reproduction, is the theme of this passage. Rivers are the fruit of holy union brought about through thirst, intense desire. Note the movement: "thirst," "come unto me," "drink," "flow," or in other words, desire leads to Jesus, satisfaction is found (expressed by "drinking or believing"), life-rivers result. All this must be translated into terms of spirit or it remains forever sibylline. "This spake he of the Spirit." From the matured spirit-life, the life Christ-satisfied, its thirst Christ-quenched, is born this progeny divine, flowing, sparkling, life-giving. And what are the "rivers"? Fertilizing thoughts far carried by spirit, voice, or pen; tides of fervid love; deeds however lowly wrought in power divine.

Rivers not brooklets, *rivers* not oceans! Abundance, but abundance ever fed and ever flowing. O Thou Source of the Life-Rivers, I come to Thee.

For the symbol and full description of these Spirit-Rivers we must turn to the river of Ezekiel's vision, where there are three points to be especially noted: Its Rise, its rapid Increase, its Healing, Life-Giving Power (Ez. 47 : 1–12).

Its rise is in the temple—"waters issued out from under the threshold of the house." So the Spirit-Rivers rise in the temples of God-dwelt souls, "from within him shall flow rivers of living water."

Its increase is marvellous, in about one and one-half miles growing from the trickling streamlet to the river that could not be passed over, "waters to swim in." No earth-river answers to that description, only the rich effusions of the Spirit of God through holy lives.

Its healing, life-giving properties are unparallelled,—"everything shall live withersoever the river cometh." For fulfillment again must we turn to the Spirit-Rivers, and oh, what heavenly graces are diffused abroad by one holy-life, one Christ-irradiated personality. To be a Dead Sea soul is an awful thing, life-influences all corrupt; to be a Life-River channel is a glorious thing, life-influences all Christ-centred, Christ-generated.

Meditation Fourteen

THE LIGHT OF LIFE

(*Chapter 8*)

Subject: The Master's Full-length Portrait drawn by Himself.
Scene: The Temple Courts.
Persons: Jesus and the Jews.
Central Thought: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life."

Interior Truth: THE opening scene is in perfect harmony with the life and character of Jesus. Shame and Misery are at the bar of Innocence and Mercy. Behold the pitiful Brother,—"stooped down." Abashed she stood, the brutally accused, but with the chivalry born of perfect holiness He veiled His gaze. Behold the skillful Pleader,—"He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone." And those coarse accusers, not the accused, all pass out in the awful silence from the searching of that self-revealing word. Behold the merciful Judge,—"Neither do I condemn thee." He knew all that lay behind that hour, and "The love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind." Behold the mighty Regenerator,—"Sin no more." And the door swings wide to a new life.

Why has the church so lost that attitude of the pitiful Brother? And woman especially, why is she so bitter, so unforgiving, towards her sister thus sinning? Why has she so failed to demand "the white-life for two" as well as for one? O for the *justice* and the love of Jesus!

Light, the light of life! Naught less will suffice. There is the light of day, the majestic sun, and it is glorious,—one ceaseless night would be maddening. There is the

light of night, the illimitable stars so exalting, and they are grand and dear,—one endless blaze of day would be torture. There is the light of home, the hearth-fire's glow, the lamp in the window, and they are comforting,—every heart craves shelter, tenderness, intimacy. There is a light in which is concentrated all the pure rays from sun and star and hearth-fire—the light of human love; and without its radiance life would be hell. But past all these, over all, through all, must shine the "Light of life," or we are undone. It is the Light of Heaven and the Light of Earth, it is the Light of Day and the Light of Night, it is the Light of Home and the Light of the Heart. When every other light burns brightest its effulgence outshines them all; when every other light is darkened it never fails. It shines in the night of sorrow and transfigures; it shines in the dawn of joy and sanctifies; it shines in the blackness of sin and cleanses; it shines in the eclipse of hope and lures on to the Infinite. It is the Light of Love, Perfect Love.

THE POWER OF LOVE

I never knew how sweet a thing Love was
Until I stood alone
'Twixt the sea and the pathless land
In the deep night,
And One drew near Whose eyes kindled a light
Within my soul, and lo, the way
grew clear.

I never knew how sweet a thing Love was
Until I climbed the hills of dawn
'Mid the roses' bloom and the thrush's song
And the sparkling dew,
And One to meet me came before Whose face
The morn grew pale.

I never knew how sweet a thing Love was
Until with a hope too great,
A dream too high and holy,
My heart was nigh to break,

When One unto me came Whose spirit mixed
with mine
In power to create.

I never knew how sweet a thing Love was
Until the earth, yea death and time,
Lay vast and full of mystery
'Twixt heart and heart,
And lo, they still did beat as one
In Love's bright realm divine.

I never knew how sweet a thing Love was
Until through a broken heart
Love's tides of lavish life but found
A wider, freer sweep
To gladdest, uttermost outpouring
And infinite beatitude.

"I am" the Light of the world, the Freedom-giver. And "when ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know I am." "Before Abraham was born I am." Yes, He is the "becoming One,"[1] becoming to us all we need as we come to know Him and to appropriate Him, and being made known to us through the Cross, the Cross of His own uplifting, aye, and oftentimes, the cross of our own heart-breaking. As Emancipator from the slavery of sin and the slavery of error He stands revealed here, and Emancipator too from death. Error, Sin, Death, what tyranny they have exercised, what cruel slave-masters they have been! But now I may be free. The Deliverer has come. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8: 2). "Sin no more" is the mandate, and "No word from God shall be void of power" (Luke 1: 37). Make me, Lord, an abider in Thy word, a truth knower, a son in Thy house, a keeper of Thy word, that so I may be free (vs. 31, 32, 35–51).

[1] Rotherham's definition of *Yahveh*.

Meditation Fifteen

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

(*Chapter 10*)

Subject: The Shepherd and His Sheep.
Scene: The Temple Courts.
Persons: Jesus and the Jews.
Central Thought: "I came that they may have life and may have it abundantly."

Interior Truth: In Himself Jesus combines the offices of door, fold, pasture, universal shepherd. He is the means of access to life; He is to all within rest and refuge; He is Himself the sustenance of life; and in Him we meet the kindly relationships of an oriental shepherd and his flock,—calling by name (individualizing), leading, mutual knowledge.

The Lord—the Lord Jesus Christ—is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in pastures of budding grass—delicious Rest, Himself the verdant couch. He leadeth me beside the waters of quietness,—O peaceful Walk, Himself the limpid streams. He restoreth my soul—glorious Re-creation, perfected Fruit of love. He guideth me in the paths of righteousness,—blessed Freedom, Himself the way! Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou art with me,—populous, luminous Dark with the Great Companion! Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies,—Banquet of love, Himself the feast. Thou hast anointed my head with oil,—illuminating Unction, Himself the Holy Oil, the flaming Spirit. My cup runneth over,—O overflowing Provision, Himself

the Cup of Life! Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my life,—Pilgrimage sublime, Himself His greatest gift. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever,—Home at last, Thy breast, Thyself!

"This parable spake Jesus unto them but they understood not." Ever is He speaking to us in parables, proverbs, allegories. I bask in the glowing sunshine and lo! it is His voice saying, "I am thy unsetting Sun." I sail the mighty deep and its vastness is a myriad tongue singing, "I am thy exhaustless All-Source." I breathe deep of fragrant air, scent of pine and rose and hay, to hear the whisper, "I am thy Breath of Spirit." I traverse the world's highways to read at every turn, "I am thy soul's Highway to all high goals." I eat and drink for my body's sustenance and the common meal becomes a Fellowship feast because He is saying, "I am Bread and Water for thy spirit." I behold the earth's boundless harvests and hear, "I am thy Fertility." I walk in my garden's sweet seclusion and He meets me with, "I am thy Garden." O may we understand!

A PSALM OF THE GARDEN

The Lord my Garden is
  Incomparably fair,
All beauty, coolness, calm,
  Where I walk in peace and prayer.

The rapture of the trees,
  The dewy breath of morn,
The anthems of the birds,
  Are here Divinely born.

Pure fountains sparkling flow,
  Elixir of delight;
And sun and stars unveil
  Far mysteries of light.

Each tender growing thing
The Spirit winds soft kiss,
And sweep the ether waves
To symphonies of bliss.

Ambrosial fruits abound,
Fresh rip'ning every hour;
And fairest flowers entwine
A perfumed vestal bower.

The Garden's commerce sweet?
'Tis Love's Divine enthrall,
The issues *unto life*
Devoid of blight or pall.

O here will I abide
In blessedness complete,
Incensed Bower of Love,
My spirit's deep Retreat.

"I lay down my life—I lay it down of myself." What sublime self-sacrifice, what splendid self-assertion! "No man taketh it from me,"—not Judas the betrayer, not Pilate the Judge, not the nails nor the spear; not even the weight of the world's sin breaking His heart, caused the death of Jesus. "I lay it down, I lay it down of myself." He dismissed His spirit, "Accomplished!" the triumphant note. Dear Lord, what remains for me to exercise sovereignty over in the realms of my own being, *sovereignty to sacrifice?* I thought I gave Thee all long since, and yet as I ask what remains, vast territory of unguessed possibility in mind and heart and will break on my sight. May the "mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2 : 16; Phil. 2 : 5) be mine, and the will of God (Phil. 2 : 12), and the heart of Jesus (Phil. 1 : 8). May more complete degrees of domination by the Divine Spirit be attained. May the "inordinate activity of the soul with its power of mind and will" be restrained, that I be not merely natural (psychical) but spiritual (1 Cor. 2 : 14–15). That will be a day of power, for "Ye shall receive power when the

Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1 : 8), the Spirit of Wholeness (holy from A. S. *halig—hal*—"whole"), wholeness of intellect, wholeness of volition, wholeness of affection. And then shall still be brought to birth through the human the Divinely begotten, for surely such is "the underlying hope of the Incarnation." [1]

[1] In Acts 1 : 8 and Luke 1 : 35 the same Greek word is used, *επελθόντος*.

Meditation Sixteen

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

(*Chapter 11*)

Subject: The Resurrection of Lazarus.
Scene: A Tomb near Bethany.
Persons: Jesus, Mary and Martha, their Friends.
Central Thought: "I am the resurrection and the life."

Interior Truth: He loved and yet He lingered. He loved, yet His friend Lazarus died and His friends, Martha and her sister, mourned a brother's death. He *loves*, yet He lingers. He *loves*, yet death and sorrow invade the homes of His loved ones. Is it a paradox? Nay, it is "for the glory of God," it is for the enrichment of souls, for "Mortals miss far prospects by a level bliss" and "Sorrow builds a palace in the soul with windows opening on eternity."

"Lord if." Oh, to know there is no "if" to Him! He always is on time, He always does His best for us, "His love fills infinitude wholly, nor leaves up nor down, one spot for the creature to stand in." The "*if*" is all with us—*if* we had trusted, *if* we had obeyed, *if* we had loved, *if* we had waited. Forgive me, Lord, that so often I have said "if" to Thee, that so often I have accepted the heresy that circumstances forestalled Thee; and may I henceforth walk in the blessed assurance that naught can intercept Thy designs of love, that Thy withholdings are as precious as Thy gifts, and that every "Valley of Weeping" may become a place of springs (Ps. 84: 6).

"I am the resurrection and the life." Wonderful words, exhaustless in comfort and hope. Hearing them the graves that yawn across our pathway become Gardens

of God planted for the Eternal Spring, and we raise the triumph shout, "O death where is thy victory?" "I *am* the resurrection,"—not *will be*. Blessed present tense. Lord, I believe it. "*I* am the resurrection"—no mere word of power but the very Lord of life Himself. O to "know Him and the power of His resurrection"! "Shall live"—when He comes (1 Thess. 4 : 16). "In no wise shall die"—if alive when He comes (1 Thess. 4 : 17).

"*He groaned in the spirit and was troubled.*" "*Jesus wept.*" The sorrows of our Lord were many. He was "grieved" (Mark 3 : 5) over heart-hardening. He "sighed deeply" (Mark 8 : 12) over the sign-seekers. He "wept" (John 11 : 35) in sympathy with the sisters of Bethany. He "wept aloud" with longing and pity over doomed Jerusalem (Luke 19 : 41). His soul was "troubled" (John 12 : 27) before the prospect of what it must cost to reveal God's love to men. And He was "exceeding sorrowful" in the awful aloneness and mystery of Gethsemane (Matt. 26 : 38).

And must I not conceive Him still the Man of Sorrows, still grieved over our hardness of heart and the gross materialism of His own, still mingling His sympathy with the tears of His loved ones, still yearning with infinite pity over those who will not have life, and still entering the Garden's gloom with every soul that staggers forward to its supreme sacrifice? As long as His loved ones suffer He must suffer; our own hearts tell us that. "The Christian idea of God is not that of a being outside the universe, above its struggle and advances, looking on and taking no part in the process, *solely* exalted, beneficent, self-determined and complete; no, it is also that of a God, who loves, who yearns, who suffers, who keenly laments the rebellion and misguided activity of the free agents brought into being by Himself, who enters into the storm and conflict. It is a marvellous and bewildering thought, but it is the revelation of Christ." [1]

"Many believed." "Took counsel that they might put

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge.

him to death." Solemn reflection. The climactic "sign" wrought by Jesus had directly opposite effects,—faith, and antagonism headed up in a plan for murder. Is this not true of all God's dealings?—their effects are according to the recipients' attitude of mind, state of heart, the Spirit-operations within. Sorrow embitters some, chastens and beautifies others. Prosperity makes some proud and selfish, to others it is a stewardship. The call of Christ and the opportunities of grace harden some to a very mockery of Divine mercy, while others are won by the charms of Heavenly Love to leave all and follow Jesus. How am I meeting and receiving and using the varied providences of God?

Meditation Seventeen

THE BELOVED GUEST
or
JESUS AND HIS FRIENDS AT HOME

(*Chapter 12 : 1–11*)

Subject : The Anointing by Mary of Bethany.
Scene : The Bethany Home.
Persons : Jesus, the Bethany family, the Disciples.
Central Thought : "The house was filled with the odor of the ointment."

Interior Truth : "They made him a supper." A feast on the way to the Cross! Sublime Sufferer, by Thy holy calm, Thy strength to keep sorrow in the background that others' kindly pleasures be unchecked, make me more self-effacing; may "langour not be in my heart," may I

"Go bury my sorrow,
That others be blest."

"Mary therefore took a pound of ointment, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment." It is the sweet old story of love, a woman's love for the woman's Friend. It was Mary's love-offering. It was her best,—"pure nard," "very precious." It was lavished on Jesus—"anointed his feet." It filled the house with fragrance. It was criticized—"Why not . . . given to the poor?" It met the approval of Jesus—"Let her alone." It was in anticipation of His death,—"against the day of my death."

Beloved Guest, Thou art with us still. We too may bring to Thee our love-offerings. May we bring our best, the sealed treasure of the heart. O, on Thee may our love be lavished, Thee first, Thee always! Forbid that work, that duties, *religious duties*, that people, even the "poor," should so occupy our time and thought that Thou art given secondary place. May consecration to Thee, not consecration to Thy service, characterize our lives. We doubt not criticism will be our portion, the mystic is the misunderstood. But if we have Thy approval, Thy sympathy, it is enough. And we know Love's fragrance is all-pervasive, yea, too, a very part of the Evangel. May we be ambitious for such a "memorial." Not in anticipation of Thy death may we now bring our offering, that awful hour is past; but of Thy Bridal, Thy coming again, Thy Triumph Hour. And so may the record run, even for us, "She hath done what she could." (See also Matt. 26 : 6–13, the second anointing.)

Some of Love's high attributes are conspicuous in this sweet home scene. It is lavish, calculating not. It is royal, munificent. It gives its best, nothing is too precious, ah, nothing is precious enough. It is regardless of criticism. It does the unconventional, the original. It is prescient. These two women (if the unnamed woman of Matthew 26 was another than Mary) alone of all the disciples dimly discerned the shadow of the cross. It holds the key to the loved one's true innermost self; yes, to love is to understand the beloved. It is odorous, the very breath of Heaven, pervading "all the house," all the world. It is highest service, the highest service of which man is capable,—"what she could." It builds the only enduring memorial. O, to know the enslavement of love!

The presence of Jesus is still a touchstone of character; hospitality, friendship, love, criticism, curiosity, hate, are revealed in its white light: Martha serves, Lazarus fraternizes, Mary wastes love, the disciples criticize, Judas calculates, the people are idly curious, the chief priests deliberate murder. Beside whom do I take my place?

Perhaps just here we may pause to review the attitude of Jesus towards the women with whom in this Gospel He is associated:—

Chap. 2. At the desire of His mother He works His first "sign," that beautiful miracle of water's transmutation into wine, to grace and gladden a festive occasion, to relieve embarrassment to hospitality.

Chap. 4. To the Samaritaness He speaks the most self-revealing words, words of transcendent import; and thus commissions her His first evangelist.

Chap. 6. To the adulteress He is chivalrous. He constitutes Himself her defender, and then her Redeemer.

Chap. 11. To the Bethany sisters He journeys to share their sorrow, to bring them unspeakable joy, to utter to them words of eternal comfort.

Chap. 12. From Mary He accepts the tribute of discerning love, and gives her the all-satisfying response of His complete understanding of her.

Chap. 19. For His mother's care His last thoughts are given.

Chap. 20. To Mary Magdalene He grants a first interview after His death, and charges her glad herald of His resurrection.

And what is the lesson to be drawn? Paul expresses it:—"There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no *male and female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. 3:28). The relationships of Jesus were spirit-relationships. Questions of race, social status, sex, were irrelevant. Wherever He found a questing soul He met it; a receptive spirit He answered it; and His "ordination" to holy service was upon any one who would say "Come," who would "Go" with the ascension message (4:29; 20:17).

Meditation Eighteen

THE DIVINE MAGNET

(*Chapter 12 : 12–44*)

Subject : Conflict and Triumph, or The Seeking Greeks.
Scene : Jerusalem.
Persons : Jesus, the Greeks, Philip and Andrew.
Central Thought : "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto myself."

Interior Truth : The acclaiming multitudes seem to have made no impression on Jesus, but the seeking Greeks move Him profoundly.

"We would see Jesus"—that is the request. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit"—that is the answer. Well has it been said, "It is an awful thing to see Jesus. It is to gaze into the depths of Deity, it is to look into the broken heart of God, it is a vision so tremendous it is impossible that life should ever be the same again. But He is not seen till He is seen on the Cross. Not only so but He can only be seen through sacrifice in oneself, through the life wholly surrendered to God. Be careful how you ask to see Jesus, for it may be a terrible hour. And yet to see Jesus is to see all that life means."

HARVEST LAW

And die? And die?
Be buried, planted, sown,
In the fearsome dark alone?
Ah, Lord! It is a bitter word
My soul hath heard.
"Much fruit" I fain would bear,
But this canst Thou not spare,—

The cross, the grave, the night?
O leave me light!
Is there no other way?
I love the day.

Hush, my beloved!
Come closer to my heart
That love may strength impart.
'Tis an eternal word
Thy soul hath heard;
It is a royal way—
God's way, life's way, love's way;
I could not spare it me
Nor can I thee.
Wilt bide for aye alone,
O for love's sake be sown!

The humanity of Jesus is again and again disclosed in the effect which events have upon Him. Greeks at the door, Greeks representing world-thought, world-influence; Greeks at the door seeking Him, Him whose life has been so circumscribed but whose love was unto earth's ends, and yet who could never be known until Calvary was passed,—how all this shook the soul of the Son of Man! Greeks at the door who could speak His name and fame afar—why flings He not it wide? O hush, and hearken: "Except . . . die . . . alone." Vain to open the door. They could not see Him then, not truly, not completely. The Cross is just before. He must reach it, He must be lifted up; then would they have vision.

And how often before some suddenly lifted veil of Opportunity and Destiny the disciple has cried with his Lord, "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?" O pregnant the hour with eternal harvests if from the conflict ascends the prayer, "Father, glorify thy name." It is a full prayer.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto myself." The magnetism of the Cross and its uni-

versal scope are indicated in these words "will draw all." Until the Cross men could not know God's heart, Love's deeps. It was Christ's limitation that none knew God's heart could break for love of them. A Mary and a John might in some degree anticipate Calvary, but to all others the Cross was essential as a revelation of Divine Love. And here we find His pronouncement upon its power: resistless, universal. That is greater than the signs, miracles and wonders He wrought. Later He says, "Greater works than these shall ye do." How greater? Greater because of life's new standard and new message. Let us not forget, however, that standard can never be seen except in lives swayed by the Cross-spirit, that message can never be heard except from disciples who know the Cross-passion. "The gospel of a broken heart demands the ministry of bleeding hearts. When our sympathy loses its pang we can be no longer servants of the passion." That subtle attraction can never be released except through the perpetually "lifted-up" ones.

What are some of the causes which hinder obedience to the Harvest Law of death?—A heavenly vision not followed. A cherished plan unrelinquished when God says, "Lay it down." Some companion, friend, lover, clung to when God says, "Come out and be separate." A precious child held back from God's service. A business conducted on a basis not strictly honest. The fear of man that bringeth a snare. Unholy tempers indulged in—anger, jealousy, revenge, envy, pride, covetousness. Unholy habits,—gossip, reading trashy books, seeking amusement in unworthy ways, the practice of some secret or open sin.

> "O friends, we never choose the better part
> Until we set the Cross up in the heart."

And what does obedience to the Harvest Law mean? Just one thing: *absolute surrender to God.* It is an act of the will. It means the rule of God in the life—the life of the intellect, thinking His thoughts, yielding the mind

to His control; the life of the affections, yielding the heart with all its power of love to His dominion; the life of the volitions, yielding every choice, every decision, every act to His sway. It is to be in His hand for His pleasure. All the praying, all the Bible study, all the working in Christian organizations can never make one fruitful. To be in right relations with God is imperative. The Altar of Burnt Offering must be set up in the life.

THE POWER OF THE CROSS

(Chap. 12 : 25; Luke 9 : 24)	It realizes all the potentialities of life.
(Chap. 12 : 32)	It attracts.
(Chap. 12 : 24)	It multiplies life.
(Mark 10 : 42–45)	It leads to sovereignty of souls.
(Heb. 2 : 10)	It is the discipline of perfection.
(Gal. 2 : 20)	It lifts the human up to the divine.
(Col. 1 : 20–22; Eph. 2 : 13–22)	It is the unifying principle of all sin-demoralized life.
(Eph. 5 : 1, 2)	It is the attainment of the Christ-life on its sacrificial side.

Meditation Nineteen

THE INFINITE LOVER

(*Chapter 13 : 1–20*)

Subject : The Last Supper.
Scene : The Upper Room, Jerusalem.
Persons : Jesus and the Twelve.
Central Thought : "He loved them unto the uttermost."

Interior Truth : "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all into his hands and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper and layeth aside his garments, and he took a towel and girded himself." True greatness knows how to be most lowly. It was in the full consciousness of His Divine origin and destiny, and the full knowledge that in Him was vested all power, that Jesus took the servant's place. The service was a needful one, and love makes no nice discrimination between this task and that; what needs to be done is worthy. Let the towel be the emblem of those who have caught the holy contagion of love from Jesus.

"He loved them unto the uttermost." *Unto the uttermost.* There is no end to love. It is bounded only by our capacity to receive. Its horizons recede as we voyage on over its mighty oceans. Our need of each hour, each varying experience, each abysmal self-revelation, is just a cup dipped into its unfathomable depths.

"*Unto the uttermost*"—when we forget Him we are within its compass; or when we yearn after Him with passionate longing; or when we most need His love to satisfy some loving heart that clings to us; or when the joy of our own hearts is too great to bear alone.

"*Unto the uttermost*"—when our work falls from tired

hands and dismay of inactivity confronts us, it is enough; and when the tasks multiply and our strength is taxed and our abilities outstripped; or when like John, the herald, we find ourselves eclipsed, displaced.

"*Unto the uttermost*"—from the dawn of day and the conception of hope, through the long hours of toil to the eventide, through the birth pangs and the slow development, aye, and when dawn has no day, and conception no birth.

"*Unto the uttermost*"—through Time, past Death, unto "the times age-abiding and beyond" the great undiscovered will be love. And "grace *is* with them who love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible" (Eph. 6: 24) meeting His "uttermost" with their uttermost, and so completing the glorious circle.

"He loved." Love (ἀγάπα not ἔρος earth-love, love of desire to possess for self-satisfaction; nor φιλέω, friendship) is "the willing communication to others of that which we have and are, the exact opposite of that passion which is the desire of personal appropriation. It is an expression of character determined by will and not of spontaneous natural emotion."[1]

"Love is the experience of self-realization through self-sacrifice."

"Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul,
Love is the only angel that can bid the gates unroll;
And when He comes to call thee arise and follow fast,—
His way may lie thro' darkness, but it leads to light at last."

"What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter." "Thou canst not follow me now but thou shalt follow afterwards." How many the withheld completions of life! But "why," why not now? Press not that "why." Know there are always sufficient

[1] Westcott.

reasons for Love's withholdings, and "it is better to trust than to know." Sometimes the "why" of not knowing lies in circumstances and providences which time will unveil. Sometimes the "why" of not following lies in the lack of courage and faith and love. And, too, there may be a Divine "must needs" in delay, for God is a God of method, and all things may not yet be ready: "I go to prepare a place for you." Or again, there may be other work to do first—"the works that I do and greater." That there is a "hereafter" for perplexing and mysterious situations, an "afterward" of eager aspirations, an "afterward" (Heb. 12 : 11) too of chastening, and a blessed "after" (1 Pet. 5 : 10) of suffering, is the Christian's hope and incentive and consolation. "Man has forever," so let us lift up our eyes to the far horizons of the perfect whole.

All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty nor good, nor power,
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard,
Enough that he heard it once: we shall hear it by and by. —*Browning.*

Meditation Twenty

THE DYING PARENT

(Chapters 13 : 31–14 : 11)

Subject: The Children's Questions and Jesus' Loving, Illuminating Answers.
Scene: The Upper Room.
Persons: Jesus and the Eleven.
Central Thought: "Let not your hearts be troubled."

Interior Truth: THE loving familiarity of this conversation, its questions, interruptions, free expression of desire, bewilderment, doubt, should forever banish restraint in the presence of the great Friend. The "boldness" enjoined in Hebrews 4 : 16 is literally *saying all.* Emerson defines a friend as one before whom I may think aloud. May such sincerity, the sweet intimacy of these "little children," mark our communion with Jesus.

For those bowed in the death shadows that envelop a loved one three dear sources of comfort are (1) mutual love among the bereaved, (2) hope of reunion, (3) summons to carry forward that loved one's work. Jesus drew from all these at this solemn parting hour. "Love one another." "I am coming again." "The works that I do shall ye do also and greater."

The "new commandment" is new only in its centre and standard, the centre Christ, a family affection; the standard, the Cross. From the first the method of Jesus was that of a friendship, mutual attraction; it is to be His method to the end. The true Church is a *Company of Lovers* loving Christ supremely and each other *better* than self. To be "sound in love" (*healthy*, Titus 2 : 2) is a

charge that has been less emphasized in the Church than to be "sound in faith." Let us cease to ignore, to undervalue, the Christ-emphasis.

Again, the measure is the sacrificial measure, "even as I have loved you," involving the divesting Himself of the glories and prerogatives of Diety, bond-service to God, and humiliation unto the death of the cross (Phil. 2 : 5–8). The old standard "as thyself" is supplanted by the new "as I have loved" which is *better than self*.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples." The true insignia of discipleship to Jesus is love, not observance of rites and ceremonies and sacraments, nor adherence to creeds. If we have love one to another, then and only then shall the world know us as learners of the Divine Lover. Beautiful love, irradiating every human relationship, thou art the supreme *apologia*.

"*Let not your heart be troubled.*" Dear Master, sayest Thou so? Thou art leaving us, one of us is to betray Thee, one of us to deny Thee. Surely there is reason to be troubled. Yes, but there is more reason for not being troubled: I go, but I am coming, coming in an intimacy and union of spirit you have not yet known; I am only going to prepare for you that where I am you may be also; in the little while of my absence the other Advocate will be with you, and you shall be made strong and fit to carry on my work. So be not troubled, but *believe*, "believe in God, believe in me."

And thus always, in every circumstance of life, there are good and sufficient reasons for the disciple of Jesus to be not troubled. Has sin gained the mastery? "We have an Advocate" (1 John 2 : 1). Is the task too great? "Ye shall receive power" (Acts 1 : 8). Is the way lonely? "Lo I am your companion all the days" (Matt. 28 : 20). Are the needs pressing? "My God shall supply all your need" (Phil. 4 : 19). Are the weaknesses depressing? "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. 12 : 9). "Let not your heart be troubled. Believe."

"*I am the way*," the Way to every high goal, the Way by which you must travel to peace, to humility, to spirit-release, to reproductive power, to a love all-satisfying, to a prayer-life effective, to elemental truth, to radiant deathless life, for I am not only the Way but also the Truth and the Life.

CHRIST'S WAY

I asked a home, a sweet abode
With peace inflowed.
"*I* had not where to lay My head,"
Was all He said.

I sought clear light and far—"A chart
Before I start."
"*I* hold the plan. Enough for thee
One step to see."

"A comrade on the road, oh send,—
I need a friend."
"Dear heart, *I* with thee ever dwell,—
Immanuel."

"Then I shall nothing lack. Thy best
Is my request."
"Ah, yes, my best: all earthly loss,
And then—a cross!"

"E'en so, but grant Thy smile to win,
And souls from sin."
"To trust thro' dark is best, and wait,—
Fruit may be late."

"Then only this; sometime, somewhere, to rest
Within Thy breast."
"Dear Child of ageless love and care,
Thou now art there."

Meditation Twenty-One

THE DYING PARENT (*Continued*)
(*Chapter 14 : 12–31*)

"ANOTHER Comforter." The hour had struck for an advanced lesson. Its theme is the Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit the Holy. Just as the full teaching of the Cross was fittingly timed to that journey among the solitudes of Lebanon when the disciples were established in their faith in the Messiahship of Jesus and the end was drawing near (Matt. 17 : 21–28), so this of the Holy Spirit. Has that hour struck for us? Let us hearken : —

Another beside One or Advocate (*παράκλητον, para*, beside, *kaleo*, to call) will the Father give you upon my asking, and His relation to you will be threefold : *with* you (*μέθα*) in fellowship; *by* you (*πάρα*) in His presence; *in* you (*ἐν*) the springs of life.

"In that day, ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me and I in you." Here is the central truth of all Christian revelation. O what a "day" that is in the soul's history when it knows the "I in my Father, ye in me, I in you!"—first the unity of the Father and Christ, then the unity of Christ and His disciple. It is the Pentecostal day.

The unity of Christ and the disciple is twofold : "*Ye in me*"—security, home, the abandonment of the self-life for the God-life; the suppression of thought, will and affection of the mere human. For this there must be a yieldedness, what Madame Guyon would call "a state of liquefaction." It is a state of stillness, of apparent death. The sense-motions cease. We find ourselves no longer an individual atom obeying the laws of our own independent nature, but part of a great whole, in beautiful harmony

with the soul of all things and under the control of a supreme life, which again is not distinct from us, but of which we are a part.

"*I in you*,"—to will, to love, to think; Jesus expressing Himself through the faculties of the believer's soul, and working by the energies of his body. "The soul gives itself alone, original and pure to the Lonely, Original and Pure, who on that condition gladly inhabits, leads and speaks through it." "The condition of life is wonderful, it is by abandonment." "*Ye in me, and I in you*"—Christ the sphere, and Christ the impulsive, controlling power.

"My peace I give unto you." My peace—the peace of holiness, the peace of harmony with the Divine Father, the peace of duty done, the peace of love that flows free to all be it friend or foe, "the peace of God which passeth all understanding," the peace that "garrisons the thoughts." It is an element of love, that all-inclusive fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5 : 22–23). It is a characteristic of the Kingdom of God (Rom. 14 : 17). And it is incarnated in the Son of God, the *Prince of Peace*, whose gracious gift it is (Rom. 5 : 1). It is not a product of Peace Societies. It is neither secured nor preserved by armaments. It is not evolved through the ages. It is not dependent on circumstances. The individual may possess it now, be possessed by it now. The world will know its sweet reign when Man's Day ends and the Prince of Peace comes.

What an exalted place has Love in the teaching of Jesus. And how could it be otherwise since He Himself is Love? Listen, my soul, to the reiterated mandate: —

Love—it is the one commandment I leave you. It is highest service (Chap. 13 : 34).

Love—thus shall the world know ye are my disciples. It is the perfect Apologia (Chap. 13 : 35).

Love—because if you do you will keep my commandments. It is the sufficient motive power (Chap. 14 : 15).

Love—so shall you win Love, the love of the Father and of Me. It attracts even Divinity (Chap. 14 : 21).

Love—for thus can I unveil myself to you. It brings revelation of Christ (Chap. 14 : 21).

Love—and thereby become a home of the Triune God. It exalts, sanctifies (Chap. 14 : 23).

Love—thus will your sorrow at my departure become joy. It transfigures sorrow because it gives vision and also because it renders the heart capable of pure unselfishness (Chap. 14 : 28).

O Infinite Lover, teach me the Heavenly Art!

Meditation Twenty-Two

THE TRUE VINE

(*Chapter 15*)

Subject : The Community Life of the Vine and Branches.
Scene : The Walk to the Garden.
Persons : Jesus and the Eleven.
Central Thought : "Abide in me."

Interior Truth : "ALL things in nature are beautiful types to the soul that will read them." "Every object that speaks to the senses was meant for the spirit; nothing exists upon earth but for unspeakable ends."

> "Odors from blossoming worlds unknown
> Across my path are blown;
> Thy robes trail myrrh and spice
> From farthest paradise.
> I walk thro' Thy fair universe with Thee,
> And sun me in Thine immortality."

In Chapter 14 : 20 lies the germ of which Chapter 15 is the unfoldment in flower and fruit, and of which the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians are but commentaries. Here we see the Spirit-life matured (we have traced it from birth in Chap. 3); and capable of reproduction. The Community Life, the Spirit-coalescence then of Chapter 14 : 20 will manifest itself in much fruitfulness as follows :—

Verses 7, 16. *Prevailing Prayer*, because harmony of thought with the Divine, exaltation of desire, strength of will.

Verses 9, 10. *Homing in Love.*

Verse 11. *Participation in the Divine Joy.*

Verses 12, 13. *Participation in the Divine Love.*
Verses 14, 15. *Friendship with Jesus*, with all that means of holy intercourse and sublime confidence.
Verses 18, 20. *Fellowship with His suffering*, in world hatred and hostility.
Verse 20, last clause. *Fellowship with Him also in success.*
Horizons of God! How vast, how deep, how high these reaches of Spirit-life! And how Christ-centred the sources! How complete and all inclusive the unity! This is the transcendental life. There is nothing more to ask, except to be ever and forever an explorer of the "Unsearchable" (Eph. 3 : 8, with 1 Cor. 2 : 10).

"*Fruit.*" What is this fruit I as a branch am to bear by abiding in the Vine, this "more fruit" which results from pruning, this "much fruit" which follows "abiding," and which glorifies the Father? Is it not the expression of the Vine's life in inflorescence and the vintage? And what is the Vine's life? It is love, joy, peace, holiness, pity (Gal. 5 : 22–23). In its perfect purple bloom it is beautiful, exquisitely beautiful, gladdening the eye. In its crushed outpouring it is nourishing, thirst-quenching, revivifying, exhilarating.

> "Measure thy life by loss not gain,
> By the wine poured forth, not drunk,
> For life's strength standeth in life's sacrifice,
> And whoso suffers most hath most to give."

"Life in its first condition is a sacrifice, a perpetual and universal communion."

And how is it to be communicated, this life of the Vine? Answer ye ministers of God,—thou sun by thy shining, thou rose by thy fragrance, ye winds by your purifying, ye waters by your limpid sweetness, ye mountains by your strength, thou ocean by thy vastness, ye birds by your music, ye forests by your shelter. O spirit of man, homed in Spirit infinite, there are myriad modes for thy out-

breathing,—contact, radiation, distillation. Touch of hand or spirit-breath, it matters not; life knows no bounds. A radiant smile, a word of cheer, a great thought expressed, a deed of pity, a fervent prayer, a thrilling song, a calm in storm, deep sorrow bravely borne, a beautiful hope, a holy life, all are chalices for conveying to thirsty souls the Wine of the true Vine.

The Cosmic Seed. Production of seed is the purpose of the ravishing beauty of blossoms. The flowers living an intenser life than the leaf, with higher temperature, more rapid breathing, tell of the plant's concentration of effort to produce seed and thus to reproduce itself. And behind that effort lies the dream *that while the plant itself is conditioned in its life the seed it produces shall be fitted for existence in the cosmos.* Once the seed is perfected how many agents work together to execute the plant's ambitious plans: the wayward winds, the little wild creatures of the woodlands, purposeful man.

What life has not its blossom-time, seed-time? Conditioned the life may be, fettered by circumstances, as was Paul's in prison or John Bunyan's or Bella Cook's or Richard Jeffries. No matter. The seed shall be far-carried, the influence wide-spread, and the bounds who shall set?

> "Though sorrow every exit bars
> And unseen terrors round him roll,
> He wanders in a world of stars
> Who makes a window in his soul."

And not only a world of stars, of glorious dreams and visions, but of infinite possibilities.

Yes, little seed, I hold you in my hand lovingly, and with awe, so tiny, so helpless, so potent; and while imagination is fired to behold the varying harvests of the future, the "much fruit" of Chapters 12 : 24 and 15 : 5 the question reiterates itself, "*What life may not produce the cosmic seed?*" As to the soil where it shall be sown, ah, that is the world, a heart, eternity.

Meditation Twenty-Three

THE TRUE VINE (*Continued*)
(*Chapter 15*)

"Ask." In Chapters 14: 13, 14, and 15: 7, 16 do we not find three Prayer Degrees suggested, three stages or grades of asking:—the asking of *the believer*, the asking of *the abiding one*, the asking of *the going-away one*, of the lonely one, perhaps in a true sense the missionary, the outgoing one. As young believers our prayers are characterized by self-centredness and supplication reaching to the horizons of personal needs, family needs and the needs of our friends. As abiding ones adoration is a dominant note, also praise. It is so marvellous to find ourselves one with the Divine, at home in Spirit. Then intercession increases, we would fain that others, that all, might share our bliss. Horizons pale and vanish, *the world for Christ is the passion.* And then, oh then, we are initiated into the inner secrets of the Prayer Life. It is outflow. It is spirit-communication. It is uttermost, prodigal self giving. It is folding to the breast tired world-children and nursing them with a heaven-born mother-love. It is yearning over all kindred souls, spirits found in the great realms of everywhere, with a lover's devotion and blissfulness, so living in an aroma of spirit-presences. It is entering into the storm and stress of life's struggle with all fighting souls, as a comrade to share suffering, to inspire with hope and courage. O friend, it is this and infinitely more than words can convey. Once I saw the soul emblemed by bays and inlets of the seashore at low tide, waiting, waiting for the flood; then one with that mighty sea knowing no separate existence, "essential union," union at the centre; and then, oh marvel, I saw that sea dispense itself in dews and clouds and showers and rivers.

To him who hath taken the last Prayer Degree the parable is open.

"Abide in me." What meaneth this pregnant word? Let St. John be his own interpreter, "God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God in him" (1 John 4 : 16). Let St. Paul too add his illuminative word "rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3 : 17).

Love, then, is the place, the soil of abiding; Love the region of this great experience, its atmosphere, its home. So we may paraphrase "Abide in me" thus:—Abide in love, dwell in love, strike deep your roots in love, lay well your foundations in love; or, Let love be the motive power prompting and controlling your every faculty, the radiance and fragrance emanating from your personality, and as well the Divine satisfaction of your own heart. It is in this Love Realm the God-glorifying and permanent (or "abiding," verse 16) "much fruit" is borne.

"Loved," "chosen," "ordained." These words cannot be surpassed for blessed import. *Loved, loved by the Master, loved as the Father loved Him; and loved by the Father with that same mighty love wherewith He loved "the Beloved."* The measure is that of infinity. How shall we express it in finite terms? Through the Master's own life. From Him, the Word, we hear: Divine Love means fellowship unbroken (Mark 1 : 35; John 5 : 20; 8 : 29; 11 : 41, 42). Divine Love includes service to the uttermost (John 20 : 21; Phil. 2 : 5–8). Divine Love reaches to the depths of sacrifice and to the heights of glory (John 10 : 17 and 12 : 27, 28 with 17 : 22). Divine Love embraces the whole of life from the Manger-cradle, the Carpenter-shop, the Garden, the Cross, to the Ascension Mount.

O my soul, "keep thyself in the love of God." "Abide ye in my love."

Chosen, the chosen of God (Rom. 8 : 33; Col. 3 : 12); chosen in Christ (Eph. 1 : 4); chosen although foolish, weak, despised, nothing (1 Cor. 1 : 27, 28); chosen out of the world (15 : 19); chosen vessels even as was Paul (Acts 9 : 15).

Ordained, appointed, even as was the Master, *laid down.* (See Chap. 10 : 15, τιθήμι). Yes, that is the true ordination "laid down."

> "Christ the Son of God hath sent me
> To the midnight lands,
> Mine the mighty ordination
> Of the pierced hands."

Perhaps just here is the appropriate place to pause and consider the twofold plan of St. John's Gospel. (1) To delineate the Perfect Life. (2) To show how it was to be reproduced.

May we summarize thus:

I have come from the Father, from Love's land, where life and beauty reign. There I had vision of the Real, there I saw Light unobscured, there I knew Life's full power, there I learned Truth, there I dwelt in Love, there I created all things. And I have come to give you that vision, to flood your way with Light, to impart abundance of Life, to teach eternal Truth, to bless with incorruptible Love, to enable you to work together with God. Nay, more, I have come to be to you Light and Life and Truth and Love and Power.

You have received, you have believed, you have known. We are one.

And now, I go unto the Father, back to Love's land. And you, who have had the vision, who have received and believed and known, who have learned and loved, you are to do what I have done, *give the vision of Love's land.* And hush, the way to give that vision lies past the Cross. It is my way. It is your way.

THE NORTHERN CROSS[1]

Love hung His sign in heaven when earth was born,
And star-worlds bright have sung since fair Creation's morn
The Passion of God's Heart;

[1] Lines suggested by the constellations the Northern Cross (Cygnus, the Swan) and the Southern Cross.

But none could read the scroll or hear the chorus grand,
Until, ensheathed in gloom, a Cross of wood did stand
And Love for love lay dead.

O Friend, it gleams to-night, that star-set cross of fire,
Our sign, our seal, symbol of all desire,
All passion of our heart.
But know we ne'er can read it right nor make men understand,
Until, *for us*, in gloom, some cross of wood doth stand,
And love for Love lies dead.

Meditation Twenty-Four

THE WITHDRAWING ONE

(*Chapter 16*)

Subject: The Holy Spirit and His offices.
Scene: On the way to the Garden.
Persons: Jesus and the Eleven.
Central Thought: "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go I will send him unto you."

Interior Truth: "IT is expedient." The limitations of the flesh, even that of the God-man, its infirmities, its elementariness and its transitoriness, as contrasted with the Spirit, His power, His penetration, His illumination, form the subject-matter of this chapter and may well engage our deepest thought, for the teaching has permanent value through this Spirit-dispensation.

Nowhere is more clearly revealed than at this juncture the *method* of God, the fact that He follows order, plan, system. Of His method progressiveness is a key-note, means always being adapted to ends, and higher, more subtle means for sublimer, more far-reaching ends. Types and shadows, laws and ceremonies, for the elementary stage of revelation, the kindergarten; the Perfect Human, fulfillment of all the past, promise of all the future, for the advanced revelation; eternal Spirit, unheard, unseen, by the ear and eye of flesh, known only by answering spirit, unto the grand culmination of this age. And this method seen on the wide scale in the unfolding Plan of Redemption is seen on a lesser scale in our individual experience, the progress being from law to grace to love, from being occupied with means and duties, to freedom and fellowship on to unity and flaming love. Then when the Body

of Christ is complete (Eph. 4 : 11–13), transformed (Phil. 3 : 21) and translated (1 Thess. 4 : 17) all veils will be removed, the vision be clear (1 John 3 : 2).

"He will convict of sin, of righteousness, of judgment." "He shall guide you into all truth. He shall glorify me." The work of the Spirit has never changed. In relation to the world it is *Conviction*, a threefold conviction of sin, of righteousness, of judgment. We do well to read with care, with prayer, with readiness to readjust our standards of interpretation. Hearken! Sin in God's sight is unbelief; the glory of righteousness is the completed work of Redemption, proven and climaxed in the Resurrection and Ascension, first fruits of Man's return to the Home of the Father; the judgment is past, it is the judgment of the Prince of this world. Jesus Himself is the centre of this Spirit-testimony as Object of Belief, Fulfiller of Righteousness, Judge of Satan.

In relation to Believers His work is twofold,—Guidance into truth, Glorification of Jesus. First, *Guidance into Truth.* "He will show you the road." This includes the "bringing to remembrance" (14 : 26) and the "declaring coming things" (16 : 13), the former being the formula of inspiration of the Gospels, the latter that of the Epistles and Apocalypse. Among those "coming things," the "many things" which Jesus had to say to the disciples but which they were "not able then to bear" are the following: "Redemption by His Sacrifice; relation of Grace to Law; Conversion of the nations without legal conditions; Conversion of Jews; Final Apostasy; Destiny of Church to its Consummation" (Godet). O that we may follow the Way-Shower into these deep truths!

Second, *Glorification of Jesus.* Fellow-believer, is Jesus being made beautiful to thee? Art thou having fresh glimpses into the sweetness, grace, sufficiency of His love? Does He draw thee with strange, irresistible attraction? Dost thou find Him within thee a perennial Fount of Joy, Spring of Life, Fire of Holy Love? Yea, is He to thee altogether Lovely, the All Desires? Then know the Spirit is doing His work in thy heart and life.

O great Illuminator, whisper to my inmost soul, *Whatever you need Jesus is that to you.* Write that name in light upon my heart, so shall I possess the key to the unlocking all the mysteries of grace and love, "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2 : 3).

As Chapter 15 is an expansion of Chapter 14 : 20, is not this chapter an expansion of Chapter 4 : 24, "God is Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth"? That we might know Him as Spirit, that we might worship Him in Spirit, Jesus withdrew from the reach of our senses. Forth from spirit-realms He came to express and interpret to us the eternal realities; that we might follow Him into those realms He reëntered them.

Διά Της Καρδίας

Lo! From top to bottom riven
Is the veil 'twixt heart and heart,
And I enter into *vastness*,
Breadth and length and depth and height,
Finding—God, only God, within, without.
Shrine there is not, sign nor symbol,
But a Presence. Not the face nor form beloved,
Just a Presence, Spirit holy,
O all spirits, one communion,
Like the heart-clasp of all loves,
And the breath on lip and forehead
Of the brooding Life eternal
Thrilling, waking, fructifying.
Ravishment ineffable!
Call it Heaven's high invasion
Of a human soul,—
But to ends yet higher.

Meditation Twenty-Five

THE INTERCESSOR

(*Chapter 17*)

Subject : Jesus in Prayer.
Scene : The Garden.
Persons : Jesus, the Eleven, the Father.
Central Thought : "I pray."

Interior Truth : In a true sense this may be called *A Pattern Prayer* as well as that earlier prayer commonly called "The Lord's Prayer," for it is a pattern in its subjects and in its requests. Jesus first prayed for Himself, then for His immediate followers, then for His disciples of all time. For ourselves we too must ever pray, and our intercession, while including those near us, may reach throughout space and on to time's end.

"Glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee." Jesus' request for Himself was for a "real change in His personal condition," for an accession of power and glory that so He might be enabled to yet further glorify His Father. And the request was based on two facts: that the Father had already invested Him with authority, and that He had accomplished His task.

Surely this request is one the disciple also may offer: increased power for increased service; but only if it be true that the power already vested has been exercised, the task already set accomplished.

The burden of our Lord's prayer for the Eleven and for the Disciples of all time we may merge into one and consider as a whole, for all is applicable to the twentieth century disciple: —

"*Keep them*"—keep them "*in thy name*," Thy character, the perfect pledge; keep them "*from the evil*" "that they may be one even as we are," "*because* they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

"*Sanctify them*"—set them apart, make them holy, holy "in the truth" which is "thy word," because O Father, "as thou didst send me even so sent I them into the world" and they must needs be as I, *the whole life dedicated unto Thee.*

Make them one—"perfected into one," "even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." For this cause "the glory which thou hast given me, I have given unto them." And the great end to be secured is "that the world may know that thou didst send me," and know moreover that "thou lovedst them even as thou lovest me."

Bring them Home—that they may be with me and may behold my eternal glory, born of Thy mighty love, the love which I came to share with them.

Our Lord the Man of Prayer

His Prayer Life

1. Rose early to pray. Mark 1 : 35.
2. Spent the night in prayer. Luke 6 : 12.
3. Closed the busy day with prayer. Matthew 14 : 23.
4. Before a great task prayed. Luke 6 : 12, 13.
5. In time of sorrow prayed. Matthew 14 : 13.
6. Before supreme sacrifice prayed. Matthew 26 : 36–44.
7. Before special Divine manifestations prayed. Luke 3 : 21; 9 : 28, 29.

His Prayers

1. Of thanksgiving. Luke 10 : 21; John 11 : 41, 42.
2. Of supplication. John 12 : 27, 28; Matthew 26 : 39.
3. Of intercession. Luke 22 : 31, 32; 23 : 34; John 17.
4. Of example. Matthew 6 : 9–13.

His Teaching

1. Solitude and Individuality. Matthew 6 : 5, 6.
2. Confession and Penitence. Luke 18 : 9–14.
3. Importunity. Matthew 15 : 22–28.
4. Faith. Matthew 21 : 22.
5. Abiding. John 15 : 7.
6. Union. John 14 : 13, 14.
7. Sympathy. Matthew 9 : 36–38.

O mighty Friend, O glorious Lover, what thoughts, what yearnings, what hopes, did burn within Thy heart for me! How I am folded within Thy Love! Precious legacy, this last prayer: Keep, Sanctify, Unify, Glorify. It tells me all Thy mind for Thy Church, it unfolds the plan of the ages in relation to Thy disciples. More, it is an index to Thy present sorrow, the Spirit's "grief" so far is the full answer unrealized. Forgive us, Beloved,—forgive me! Even now as the dazzling mountain peaks of Thy desire burst upon my view would I abandon myself to their fulfillment. Keep *me* from evil. Sanctify *me* in truth. Make *me* one in love with all the great company of Thy followers. And at last bring *me* Home, Home to Love and Glory.

LOVE'S LAST MESSAGE AND LAST PRAYER

Life is Mystery.
"Not now . . . hereafter." Chap. 13 : 7.
Life is Longing.
"Not now . . . afterwards." Chap. 13 : 36–37.

Be patient.

Life is Service.
"As I have done." Chap. 13 : 14–15.
"As I have loved." Chap. 13 : 34.

Be lowly.
Be loving.

Life is Hope.

I am going to prepare for you. Chap. 14 : 2.
I am coming to receive you. Chap. 14 : 3.

Be not troubled.

Life is Oneness with the Divine.

The Vine . . . the branches. Chaps. 15 : 5 ; 17 : 20–21.

Be fruitful.

Life is unto Knowledge of the Divine.

"*In order that* they should know." Chap. 17 : 3.

Be jubilant.

Meditation Twenty-Six

THE MASTER OF THE GARDEN

(*Chapter 18*)

Subject: Jesus in the Open.
Scene: The Ravine (or plantation or orchard) of Kedar (The Cedars).
Persons: Jesus and the Eleven.
Central Thought: "Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples."

Interior Teaching: The Master lived the outdoor life. So all His biographers portray Him. St. John's introduction of Him is on the river's banks and under the open heavens, and there His first followers joined Him (Chap. 1). The "wilderness" of His awful conflict with Satan was the haunt of wild beasts (Mark 1 : 12, 13). His first recorded conversation took place in all probability on a housetop under the starry skies (Chap. 3), and the second we know was at a wayside well (Chap. 4). The feasts He spread, whether for the thousands or the chosen few, were out-of-doors (Chaps. 6 and 21) His favorite preaching and teaching places were the mountainside, a boat rocking on the waves, and the foot-path through the fields (Matt. 5–7; Mark 6; Matt. 12 : 1–8 and 19). When others went to their homes He wended His way to solitude (7 : 53 and 8 : 1). When the fed multitudes would bring Him vain honor He sought the mountains (Chap. 6), and when murderous hate pursued Him the secluded river's banks is His retreat (10 : 39, 41). Most of His cures were wrought in the open, as was His greatest sign (Chap. 11). His parables, similes, metaphors, breathe of the sun-steeped, wind-swept spaces,—birds and flowers, sheep and oxen, harvests and vintage. The closing of His last quiet intercourse

with His disciples was doubtless on the walk to the Garden (Chaps. 15–17). And there in the hush and retirement that so often had welcomed Him, He passed His "black hour." Under the darkened heavens He "accomplished" His mission. In a garden's dewy freshness at day-dawn He meets the Magdalene (19: 41 and Chap. 20). On a long walk He unfolds the Word to two friends (Luke 24). By the dear seashore, so rich in memories, He prepares breakfast for His tired disciples. And His transit to glory was from the quiet country (Luke 24: 50, 51).

Oh, to have watched Thee thro' the vineyards wander,
Pluck the ripe ears and into evening roam!
Followed and known that in the twilight yonder
Legions of angels shone about Thy home.

—*From Myer's "St. Paul."*

THE LITANY OF THE TREES

Into the woods my Master went,
And He was clean forspent;
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with grief and shame.
And the little gray leaves were kind to Him,
And the olives they were not blind to Him,
And the figtrees they had a mind to Him,
When into the woods He came.

Out from the woods my Master went
And He was well content,
Out from the woods my Master came
Content with death and shame.
When death and shame would woo Him last
From under the trees they drew Him last.
'Twas on a tree they slew Him last
When out of the woods He came.

—*Sidney Lanier.*

O Spirit of Music in the laughing, lisping leaves, O Spirit of Rhythm in the waving willows by yon river's brink, O

Spirit of Mystery in the wingéd winds, O Spirit of Purity in the white-drifting clouds, O Spirit of Fertility in the sunbeams' kiss, O Spirit of Sweetness in the clover's breath, O Spirit of Glory in the roses' regal bloom, O Spirit of Majesty in the illimitable star-set heavens, O Spirit of Response in the river's rippled, sun-kissed, shadowed flow, O Spirit of Motherhood in the breast of yon brooding bird, O Spirit of transforming Life in the butterfly's wings, O Spirit of Joy in the laugh of a child, O Spirit of Love at the Heart of Thy world, O Spirit of Truth in the Mind of the Infinite, abide with me. Brooding over earth's abyss Thou didst bring forth Light and Order and Life and Love. Brooding o'er this heart, without Thee waste and empty, Thou shalt bring forth the music of Thy message, the Angel of my Dream, and I shall be for Thee a Garden as Thee for me.

Meditation Twenty-Seven

THE MASTER OF THE GARDEN (*Continued*)

(*Chapter 18*)

> " If chosen souls could never be alone
> In deep mid silence open-doored to God,
> No greatness ever had been dreamed or done.
> The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude."

THE Master of the Garden, of the Out-of-doors, is also the Seeker of Solitude. St. Mark's Gospel so markedly the portrayal of a life of intensest activity none the less presents that balance which every one must preserve if power is to attend the activity. Eleven times is it recorded there that our Lord "retired," "went apart." Perhaps none need this call from the Master's life more than the Christian worker; not even the financier in a fevered metropolis is in such danger of *excess in doing*, leaving little leisure for the Presence Chamber of the King. "But thou my soul in silence wait God's leisure" (Ps. 62 : 1, Scottish metrical version).

"The Mother Country of the Great," The University of the Desert: *Silence and Solitude as Teachers*. Nature is on rare occasions loud, her habit is stillness. The drifting clouds, the burning stars, the majestic rivers, the vast deserts, the eternal hills, the ether waves, evaporation holding aloft 55,000,000 tons of water, the moon's subtle spell upon the sea,—all are silent in their operations. And, too, polarity we meet with everywhere. Night alternates with day, the sun is veiled and starry worlds dawn afar that tired eyes, brains, muscles may rest and be renewed, and that the solemn hush of shadow, the mystery of the infinite spaces, may steal over the spirit. The cadences of music are set amidst pauses; the sea ebbs as well as flows; the

winds rise and die away. Nature has her bloom-time, her fruit-time, and her rest-time dressed in russet brown or dazzling white; the fallow field yields in the end the richest harvest. And man, Creation's highest achievement, must obey the universal law, alternation of silence with speech, of rest with toil, of solitude with society, would he attain his highest, would he bear immortal fruit.

Moses, Elijah, Paul, Jesus—they all obeyed this law. In the University of the Desert with the great teachers Silence and Solitude, they learned life's profoundest lessons and were prepared to become teachers of men, they heard *God and then spake forth His word.* The Maker of the Desert, the Master of its school is Himself the course. "The awful soul that dwells in clay" must know Him, Him who is Spirit, Love, Light, Him who is "the Way, the Truth, the Life," would it reach its true end. O joy that still we may "hear the voice of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Gen. 2 : 8).

LOVE'S INTERCOURSE

Thou art a garden enclosed (*Song of Sol. 4 : 12*)

Thou sayest, O Beloved, I am Thy "Garden."
And Thou to me art what?
Thy life.
Then Thou art the living streams flowing thro' Thy Garden, the fructifying sun shining upon it; Thou art the beauty and fragrance of its blossoms, the wine of its grapes, the strength of its cedars.
Yes, thy life.
And the streams and the sunshine, the beauty, the shade,—they are the Garden?
They are the Garden.
Then we are one!
We are one.
And we shall be together in the Garden, eat together of the fruits, gather together the blossoms, rest together under the shade?

Together, Love, but not alone. Others need the sweetness and the rest and refreshing, my friends.

Thy friends?—Then they are mine; so bid them come, our friends, and rest and eat and drink,

Dost understand it, Love?—*thou* art the Garden, *thou* the wine, *thou* the blossoms, *thou* the fruits, *thou* the living streams. They must drink *thee*, eat *thee*, gather *thee*.

O Beloved! Say it over again and hold me close!

But we are one,—they will drink me, eat me, gather me.

Not Thee alone, Beloved! That were worse agony,—*Thee and me.*

Yes, Love, thee and Me.

O glorious One, my Life, my Love!—Thee and me!

Meditation Twenty-Eight

THE KING OF TRUTH

(*Chapter 18*)

Subject: The Betrayal, Arrest, Trials.

Scene: The Garden in Gethsemane, the High Priests' Home, the Prætorium.

Persons: Jesus, Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, their followers and servants, the Jews.

Central Thought: "Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end have I been born and to this end am I come into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth."

Interior Teaching: "WHAT is truth," "*the truth*"? Ah, Pilate, *the Truth* stands before thee, "I am the Truth" (14 : 6). He was "full of grace and truth" (1 : 14). Yea "grace and truth came by him" (1 : 17). He is "the true Light lighting every man" (1 : 9), "the true bread" (6 : 32); "his flesh is true meat and his blood true drink" (6 : 55). He is "the true vine" (15 : 1); to bear witness to the truth was the end of His incarnation and earthly life (18 : 37).

To live with Him then is to part company from the false; to walk with Him is to abide in Light; to partake of Him is to feast on Life; to be incorporated into Him is to bear fruit; and to hearken unto Him is to sit at the feet of the King of Truth.

Truth and Love have a varied testimony to render, and in varying circumstances find fit setting for their deliverance. From the quiet room and lingering walk with the atmosphere of sympathy, confidence, and tenderness bringing out the very sweetest fragrance of the Master's heart and mind, we plunge into the malignant airs of hate and

murder, only to find they too can release the balsam of moral grandeur. Let us never fear circumstances. Let us see in them but a *distillery of pure spirit.*

Behold the King of Truth glorious and mighty yet meek and submissive, betrayed by one disciple and denied by another, arrested by the religious leaders of His own people, fearless and in full consciousness of His dignity, faultless before the bar of the highest tribunal of earth.

O glorious King, Thou hast had many followers. Thy love so measureless, Thy bitter sorrows, Thy spotless holiness, Thy sublimity of character, have drawn great hearts and true, through all the centuries. And Thy servants have shared Thy cup and been baptized with Thy baptism, that highest gift in Thy hand. Betrayal, denial, ecclesiastical and secular opposition, vulgar force, travesty of justice, have been their portion too, and how often they have stood forth, wonderful in a Divine majesty, yet meek and submissive, fearless and aware of their dignity as true servants of the King of kings. Let me be of their number. The great drama may not be enacted in the high light of publicity; the historian's pen may never record the scenes; but to every faithful disciple there comes sooner or later the hour of darkness, the Garden's gloom, the awful aloneness of spirit, and the opportunity to testify before angels and principalities and powers, if not before men, to the might of love, to the mastership of truth.

"One dared to die. In a swift moment's space
Fell in war's forefront, laughter on his face.
Bronze tells his fame in many a market place.
Another dared to live. The long years through
Felt his slow heart's blood ooze like crimson dew,
For duty's sake and smiled. And no one knew."

Meditation Twenty-Nine

THE RECONCILER

(*Chapter 19*)

Subject: The Crucifixion.
Scene: Golgotha.
Persons: Jesus, Pilate, the Soldiers, the Jews, the Disciples.
Central Thought: "It is finished"—*Accomplished!*

Interior Truth: THE setting—crown of thorns, purple robes, mocking, gambling soldiers, shame and agony of crucifixion,—let us not make too much of it. Jesus "despised the shame" and He has not been without followers great enough to do likewise when their own crucifixion hour came.

To the *Victory* of the Cross let us turn. That is to take the Master's own view—"Accomplished!" O Mighty One, even for Thee this was no lightsome task, *to live perfectly a human life, and to achieve Humanity's redemption.* Creation never cost Thee so. At Thy will worlds issued forth into glory. At Thy word angels and archangels speed upon Thine errands of light. But this, but this, to live this life I live, just the common round, to live it under temptation, to live it under limitation, to live it truly, sweetly, nobly, grandly, in perfect obedience to Heaven's laws, the laws of righteousness, truth, and love, this was the supreme task.

But at last Thy consecration is accomplished (Heb. 5:8, 9; Luke 12:50). Thou art perfected having "learned," and Thou art become the "*Author of Salvation.*" O dear, dear Name! Title most illustrious! Take down that writing, "King of the Jews." It is too restricted. And set up not only in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, but in every tongue of earth, *Author of Eternal Salvation.*

Ring on, O death shout of triumph, *Accomplished!* Ring on down the ages, echoing and reëchoing and echoing back again, through time and eternity, through heaven and earth and hades—*Accomplished!* For He who was made a little lower than the angels we see crowned with Glory and Honor because of the suffering of death, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man (Heb. 2 : 9 ; Titus 2 : 11, R. V. ; 1 Tim. 2 : 3–6 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 22 ; Rom. 5 : 18).

And now, my soul, what of this for thee? Linger long at the Cross. It is the altar of Love. It is the Death of death. It is the coronation of the Victor. It is thine Emancipation Hour. It is Love's Outpouring. Then pass on through the days of thy flesh in the strength of the Victor, in the freedom of the Emancipator, in the beauty and sweetness and sacrifice of the Perfect Love, and in the blessed hope of the enthronement of the King of Kings, the annulment of Death, and the final supremacy of God (1 Cor. 15 : 25–28).

THE WAIL OF THE WORLD

Dost hear it, O Saviour above,—
The wail of Thy world in its woe?
Sin breaketh men's hearts. Grim and slow
Creeps the shade of the pitiless foe
Over Beauty and Honor and Love.

See them bend to their tasks, the Undone,
From whom the vision has fled.
O bitter the struggle for bread,
For lust or for greed! Their spirits are dead!
It is night 'neath the noon of the sun.

Lo they pass—pale Procession of Pain :
Little children despoiled of Bloom,
The weak to the clank of their Doom,
The strong drunk with Power, for whom
Naught is sacred at last but self-gain.

O God of the Broken Heart,
Thou dost know !—forgive the vain thought.
In strife against sin who hast fought
E'en to blood and Deliverance wrought,
Art here, the might of Thy love to impart.

Naught else will suffice. Then with me
The cup of Thy Passion O share !
That in love the bonds I may bear
For them and with Thee as we fare
To the end—Love's Reign o'er the Free.

The Sacrificial Life which had its grandly awful earth climax on Calvary, began before time, and evidenced itself in time by the incarnation with its complete self-emptying (Phil. 2 : 5–8); in the temptation, with its renunciation of power and its allegiance to God's will; in the loneliness which was seldom penetrated by full sympathy and understanding; in the sorrow which was ever bowing His heart with unutterable yearning over suffering and sin; and it is still continued, for is He not being in this our day "crucified afresh" (Heb. 6 : 6). "The sorrow of Gethsemane was in God's heart before He breathed life into man; and the suffering of the Cross continues in the Father heart till sin vanishes from the hearts of His children." With God life is an unwearied suffering of love.

THE GIFT OF GIFTS

Himself for me ! O recreative word
The pregnant æons of the past that stirred,
At last, at last, my sleeping soul hath heard,
And all the Universe is changed, transfused
With love. In that the primal light suffused
Cosmos appears from out Earth's Chaos twice confused.

Himself for me ! The mighty Lord of Life !
Then all is mine, and all that is, is rife
With good to me, despite the seeming strife.

Pain pearls begets, sorrow sweet sympathy,
The stars are born of Night's vast mystery,
And death is slave to Life's all-conquering mastery.

Himself for me! Then I was made for Thee,
O Love, Self of myself, my being's shoreless Sea.
Deep answereth to deep. O bliss to be
Homed in Thy heart, made strong to serve,
Made rich to give, to give without reserve,
As e'en from death for me Thou didst not swerve.

Meditation Thirty

THE FIRST FRUIT OF RESURRECTION HARVEST

(*Chapter 20*)

Subject: The Resurrection and First Appearances of Jesus.
Scene: The Garden, the Home.
Persons: Jesus, Mary, Thomas, and the other Disciples.
Central Thought: "He must rise again from the dead."

Interior Truth: "He must rise." "It was not possible that he should be holden of death" (Acts 2 : 24). The sublime self-surrender of Chapter 10 : 18 is matched only by its unparallelled self-assertion: "I lay down my life. . . . I have power to take it again." How could the last Adam as Perfect man and the Progenitor of the New Race of the sin-delivered (for He was made a "life-giving spirit," 1 Cor. 15 : 45), be held in death's bonds seeing that death is a fruitage of sin? Blessed "First-fruit of them that are asleep" (1 Cor. 15 : 20), to Thee be praise that of us also it may be said, *It is not possible that they be holden of death!* "O death, where is thy sting! O hades, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15 : 55).

We see what we can see. John and Peter saw grave clothes, Mary saw angels and the Lord Himself. The tears and the tarrying of love give wonderful vision. How like the Bride of Canticles is Mary: First, the plaint, "I sought him but I could not find him, I called him but he gave me no answer." "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him;" then the jubilation, "My beloved is gone down to his garden to

feed among the lilies." "Mary! Rabboni" (Song of Sol. 5 : 16; 6 : 2, 3).

This is one of Love's great hours, *the awakening to the Beloved beside, within.* Ah, it is the morning of the soul. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy form" (or when I awake I shall feast on thy form, Ps. 17 : 15).

"Cling not to me, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father." This life is a passing stage. In the spirit-realms there will be perfect freedom. Spirit-relationships are untrammelled, without conventionalities. But that stage is not yet reached. "That day" of promise has not yet come—"I am not yet ascended," "the Spirit is not yet" (14 : 20; 7 : 39).

O Mary, I can understand the ardor, the abandon of thy love, in that first rush of joy. But this was not the time for the lavishing of sweet human tendernesses, not the time for an abandonment to the luxury of liveliest human affection. Well for thee when thou didst hear that restraining word; there was work to do, an errand to run, a commission to fulfill, "go, say."

The Risen Lord did not say "Love me not." His word of reserve, of restraint, has no hint of that. And oh, in our human relationships I think we must all sometimes, and some of us ofttimes, come up to this boundary line and pass over into the rare atmosphere of spirit-altitudes. Let none say that in the advancing Christian life, in the life of absolute surrender to Christ and His service, there is a lessening place for deepest, highest, truest human love in its thousandfold expressions and relationships. That is false, a libel, a caricature of what is Divinest in the Divine Glory. The more perfectly one is centred in the Centre of Being, the more free and full must be the outflow of love through every channel of life. But none the less is it true *that love may not be bound nor held.* Claims which are not consonant with its widest reaches, its untrammelled flux and influx, must be met by "Cling not to me." "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh" (2 Cor. 5 : 16).

"Blessed the not seeing and believing." Not upon a faith that is baseless does our Lord place His encomium, but upon a faith that does not demand the very last possible proof. Three years of intimacy with the wonder-working Jesus of Nazareth, three years of instruction under the Teacher who spake as never man spake, that last evening of holy communion, so charged with reassurance, comfort and promise, those awful hours on Golgotha when very Nature's heart was torn, to which is now added the testimony of his fellow-disciples that their Master is risen, should surely have been sufficient evidence for Thomas. There was no demand made upon him for a weak, unreasoning and unreasonable credulity. But the man who could assert in face of Jesus', "And the way ye know," a flat contradiction, "Lord, we know not the way" (14:4, 5), can also say to his brethren, "I will not believe *except*." It is *self-assertiveness*. We can sympathize with Thomas while not admiring his attitude. And in the Master's gracious granting of the very proofs demanded we may well learn the patience of love in all our dealing with those "slow of heart to believe." And how splendid is the result: "My Lord and my God!"—first testimony to the Deity of the risen Lord.

"These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in his name." "The Christ," "have life." Yes, we needed the full record to a full faith, to a full life. What a Biography to write! No higher evidence can be asked for the historic Christ than the fact of His Biography, for what human mind could ever have conceived these Divine lineaments? Let us go back to gaze upon the portraits of this Man of Men as etched by the beloved disciple:—The Logos, Love Revealed, The Spirit Baptizer, The Great Comrade, The Wonderful Guest, The Teacher Come from God, The Bridegroom, The Tired Traveller, The Healer, The Vicegerent of God, The Gracious Host, Nature's Lord, The Source of Life Rivers, The Light of Life, The Good Shepherd, The Resurrection and the Life, The Beloved Guest, The Divine Magnet, The

Infinite Lover, The Dying Parent, The True Vine, The Withdrawing One, The Intercessor, The Master of the Garden, The King of Truth, The Reconciler, The First Fruit of Resurrection Harvest; and now let us blend them into one great composite, *The Eternal Christ.* Yes, it is the Christ, the Son of God. Lord, I believe.

Meditation Thirty-One

THE UNCHANGED FRIEND

(*Chapter 21*)

Subject : The Last Breakfast Together.
Scene : The Sea of Tiberias.
Persons : Jesus and the Disciples (seven).
Central Thought : "Come and break your fast."

Interior Truth : THERE is ever an "after" to "these things" however wonderful. The revelations of love are exhaustless. And how often it is that the renewed manifestations are in the dear places of blessed memory, "at the sea of Tiberias." And always they reveal the familiar, unchanged Friend : encouraging the unsuccessful fisherman by a full net, preparing breakfast for the tired toilers, leading the conversation to themes of highest import. Yes, it is the very same Jesus.

O Kingly Figure on the shore, day is ever breaking when I see Thee across the sea of my misconducted, vain endeavor ! The harvest of the deep I can only gather when Thou dost direct. And then shall I refresh me at the table of Thy bounty in glad acceptance of Thy kindly "Come and break your fast."

But I would fain cease now and forever this feverish activity, the passion of doing that is of self. These fishermen had finished their work as fishermen. There had come into their new activities a pause, a rest, an interlude, one of the elements of music, one of the essentials of strong life, one of the sweetest provisions of love. Yet they missed the meaning of it all in their impatient loneliness, their restless longing. To work ! Anything to banish thought and speed these heavy-footed hours. Fruitless all such toil. Impotent all such effort. Ah, and so much more

than useless—a priceless opportunity forever lost to wait and hearken, to ponder the past, to set truth in order within.

Learn thou the lesson, O my soul. "Sit still my daughter, for the man will not rest until he have finished the thing" (Ruth 3 : 18). It is to the waiting ones the working God (Isa. 64 : 4) gives visions transcendent, and for the "sitting still" the great Kinsman arises.

"Lovest thou me." First the breakfast, then the searching, tender rebuke and admonition. So characteristic this of Him who linked to infinite power infinite tenderness, who raised the dead with one word of command and with the next directed that food be given (Mark 5 : 41, 43), and who dispatched an angel with nourishment for the exhausted, disheartened prophet (1 Kings 19 : 4–8).

O thrice-repeated question, with its thrice earnest asseverations, how suggestive of the thrice-repeated denial! It was Peter's trial and acquittal—imperfect, trembling human love before the Perfect Love, but love proved love, and that is enough. Peter has heard the only question methinks any soul will hear in the great White Day, "Lovest thou me?" And the final test of that love will be, "Hast thou fed my lambs, tended my sheep?" For "this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (1 John 4 : 21).

"Till I come." Blessed hope! Of all the precious truths revealed by this Gospel of Love, none is so pregnant with unspeakable beatitudes, none so fragrant with holy and happy mystery, none so dazzling with unthought glory, as this great completing word. The angel caught it up and sang it again in comfort to the gazing group on the Ascension Day, "shall so come" (Acts 1 : 11). On every occasion of the "breaking of bread" the sweet hope is renewed, "Till he come" (1 Cor. 11 : 26). And the risen Lord's own final word of revelation is "I come quickly" (Rev. 22 : 20).

"Amen, Come Lord Jesus."

The Great King

He is a great king over all the earth (*Ps. 47 : 2*).

He is coming :—

Isa. 11 : 1–9 ; 35 ; Jer. 23 : 5, 6 ; Zech. 2 : 10, 11 ; Ps. 2 : 72.

From the mouth of seer and psalmist,

1 Pet. 1 : 10, 11.

(Speaking oft more than they wist) ;

Matt. 24 : 25 ; Mk. 13 ; Lu. 17 : 20–37 ; Jno. 14 : 3 ; 21 : 21, 22.

From the four-fold blest Evangel,

Acts 1 : 11.

And the promise of the angel ;

2 Thess. 1 : 7–12.

From the great apostle's lips,

The Rev. from Ch. 1 : 7 to 22 : 20.

And the grand Apocalypse,

I have heard it, O my soul —

He is coming, the Great King.

He is coming :—

Rom. 8 : 18–25.

By the groaning that's Creation's,

Ps. 2 . 1 ; Matt. 24 : 6–8.

By the tumult of the nations,

Matt. 24 : 12 ; 2 Tim. 3 : 1–5 ; 2 Thess. 2 : 1–12 ; Jude 17–19.

By iniquity's abounding,

Matt. 24 : 14.

By the Gospel's world-engirdling,

2 Pe. 3 : 1–7.

By false teachings manifold,

Matt. 24 : 12 ; Rev. 3 : 15, 16.

By the love that waxeth cold,

Is the blessed hope confirmed,—

He is coming, the Great King.

He is coming:—

Heb. 1:3; 7:25. From the throne of intercession,

Matt. 24:42; 1 Thess. 4:17; Zech. 14:6. R. V. For His watching saints' ascension,

2 Thess. 1:7; Zech. 14:5. R. V. By angelic hosts attended,

Acts 1:9–11; Lu. 21:27. On the clouds as He ascended,

Matt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16. To the sound of trumpet pealing,

Matt. 24:27. In a light all light eclipsing.

Glorious pageant, O my soul,
This the coming of the King.

He is coming:—

Eph. 5:25–32. For His long-affianced Bride,
Spotless now and purified;

1 Thess. 4:13–18. Sleeping, waking (life or death),

1 Cor. 15:50–54; 2 Cor. 5:4. All are changéd in a breath.
O the rapture, O the grace,

1 John 3:1–3. When we meet Him face to face!

Titus 2:13. Wondrous message, "blessed hope,"
He is coming, the Great King.

He is coming:—

Luke 23:18. Long the Banished, now the Victor,

2 Thess. 2:8, 9; Isa. 26:20, 21. Sin's and Satan's Conqueror,

Ps. 2:8, 9 with Rev. 2:26, 27; Ps. 47:2, 7, 8; 72:27; Zech. 14:9; Mic. 5:4, 5. King of nations, Prince of peace,

Ps. 46:9. Maker of all wars to cease,

Ps. 72:1, 2, 4. Righteous Judge, Avenger strong,

Ps. 72:12–14. Swift Redresser of all wrong,

Rom. 11 : 11–29 ; Zeph. 3 : 17, 20.

Ps. 72 : 16 ; Isa. 35 : 1, 2 ; 2 Pe. 3 : 8–13.

Israel's promisèd Restorer,
Nature's Saviour and Renewer.
O the gladness, O the sadness,
He is coming, the Great King !

He is coming :—

Rev. 1 : 6 ; 1 Pe. 2 : 5.

To your knees ye priests of prayer.
Let your supplication share

Isa. 53 : 20.

The soul-travail of His exile,

Heb. 10 : 12, 13 ; Jas. 5 : 7–11.

And the hopes its length beguile.
To your knees, ye men of pride,
Hear again, *For you He died.*

Isa. 61 : 1–3 with Luke 4 : 18, 19.

Ere sweet mercy's day be spent,
Of your unbelief repent.
Soon this Gospel age must end,
For He's coming, the Great King.

Canticle to Jehovah

Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise to the Maker of all things,
Preserver, Upholder and Head,
Lord of all being and life,—
Archangel's, wee flow'rets and man's—
Light of the stars and the hearth-fires,
Companion, Guardian, Friend!
Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise! Praise! Praise!

Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise to the Caller of Israel,
Giver of Jacob his place,
Deliverer, Lawgiver, King!
Praise to the Guide of the march,
Provider of manna for men!
Praise to the Rock of His people,
Unchanging, unfailing, Almighty!—
Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise! Praise! Praise!

Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise to the Babe of the manger!
Praise to the Master of men!
Praise to the Teacher and Leader,
The Healer, the Lover, the Friend!
Praise to the Lamb on the altar,—
The suffering Christ of the cross!
Praise to the Risen again,
Victorious All-Giver of life!
Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise! Praise! Praise!

Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise to the glorified Lord
Seated at God's right hand!
Praise to the Pray-er unceasing!
Praise to the Giver of Spirit,
And Head of His body the Church!
Praise to the Coming One!
Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise! Praise! Praise!

Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise to the King of the Nations!
Praise to the Righter of wrong!
Praise to the Bringer of peace,
And Fulfiller of all things to Israel!
Praise to the Saviour of all men,—
Alpha, Omega, Almighty!
Praise to Jehovah, praise!
Praise! Praise! Praise!

A Prayer

Jesus My Lord —

By Thy Manger Birth deliver me from false standards of greatness.

By Thy Silent Years show me the splendor of a hidden life with God.

By Thy Carpenter's Shop suffer me never to forget the dignity of lowly toil.

By Thy Spirit Baptism lead me to my Jordan, my Pentecost.

By Thy Wilderness Conflict make me know tho' life be struggle, it may be victory also.

By Thy Year of Obscurity—two conversations with individuals its chief recorded events—teach me the sublime indifference of circumstances and the exalted possibilities of a private talk, a casual meeting.

By Thy Supreme Revelation to the woman at the well, help me to see through all externals to the receptive soul.

By Thy Ceaseless Ministries in great and small, keep me consumed in love's labors.

By Thy Retreats—Desert and Mountain and Lake-side solitudes, Nights of Prayer—stamp my life with a holy apartness.

By Thy Sweet Social Ways, everywhere at home, always accepting hospitality of all kinds from all classes, deliver me from caste and from asceticism.

By Thy Love of Little Children teach me the glory and the hope of infant years, and budding youth.

By Thy Comradeship with society's ostracized and outcast, make me too the comrade of the shunned and despised.

By all Thy Dear Devotion to the Home reveal to me the glory of this Kingdom of Hearts, and enable me to make my home a place of rest for Thee in Thy Disciples.

By Thy Simplicity—landless and homeless, the open book of nature for library, a hillside or byway or boat for pulpit, writing eternal truths on a few dull hearts—call me, oh, call me from attachment to things.

By Thy Unsparing Denunciation of Pretense create in me a hatred of all sham, all insincerity.

By Thy Patient Teaching of the Few who were to perpetuate Thy Life give me to realize the high place of Teacher with Disciple.

By Thy Strange Bitterness of cruel enemies, false followers, weak friends, inspire me to give all and be content with nothing.

By Thy Hunger for Friendship and Sympathy flood my heart with all strong and beautiful affections.

By Thy Absolute Dependence upon and Union with the Father, show me the self-directed life is one of weakness, never one of power.

By Thy Cross and Passion thrill me to a love unto death with Thee for others.

By Thy Open Grave and Cloud Ascent let me see past the outpoured life's seeming loss to its eternal gain.

By Thy Coming Again irradiate my earth days with Thine own sublime hopes.

Thus, by Thy matchless Life, true, simple, loving, lived in right relations with Thyself, Thy fellows and Thy God, O teach me how to live, Thou Man of Men, the Perfect Love. Amen.

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